# A CHRISTIAN WITNESS

*History of the First Presbyterian Church*

*Gastonia, North Carolina*

*1882–2005*

by Marion A. Ellis

THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHAPEL HILL

THE COLLECTION OF
NORTH CAROLINIANA
PRESENTED BY
H.G. Jones North Carolina
Heritage Fund

C285.09
G25f1

*A Christian Witness*

First Presbyterian Church  Gastonia, North Carolina

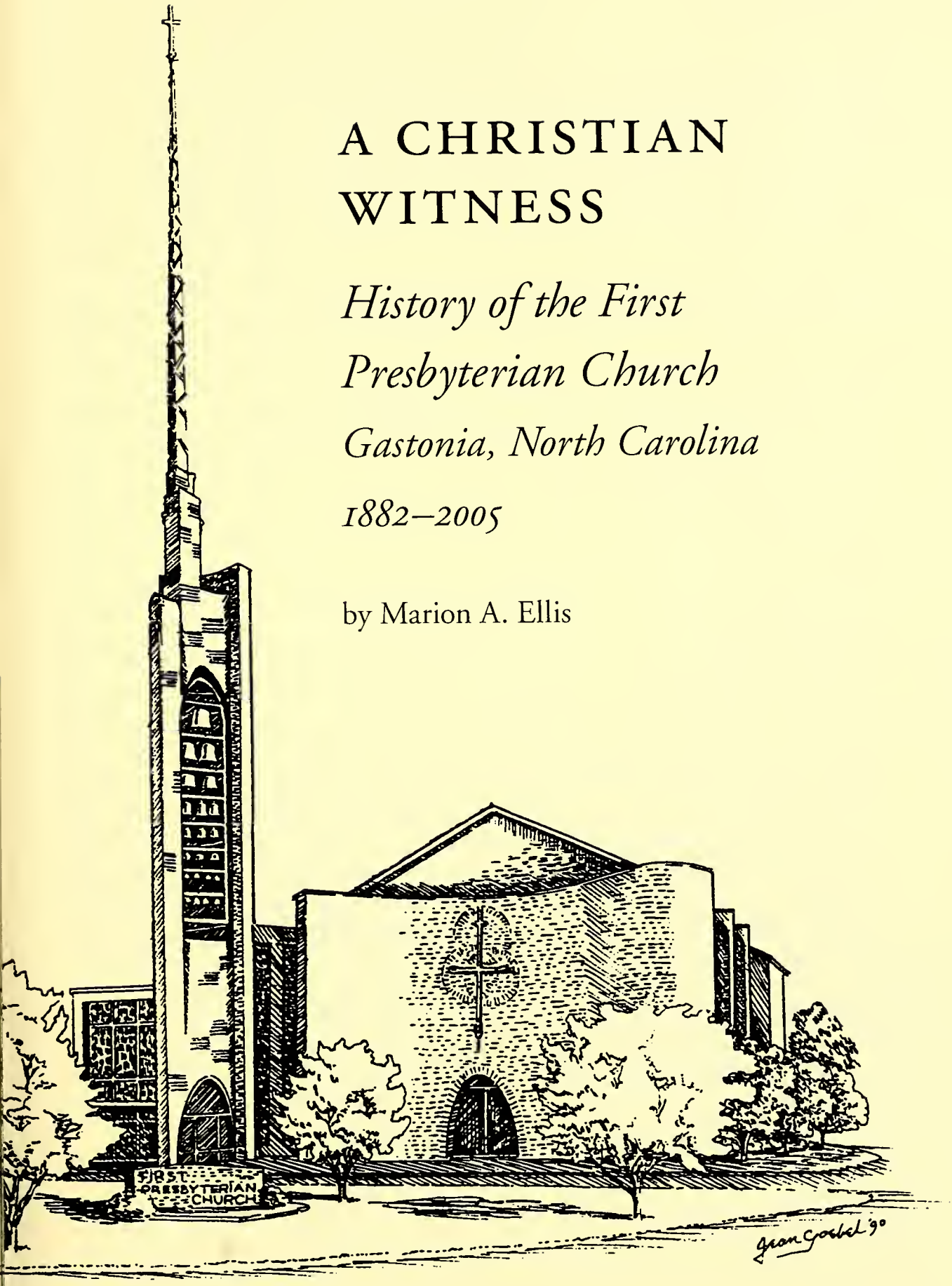
# A CHRISTIAN WITNESS

## *History of the First Presbyterian Church*

*Gastonia, North Carolina*

*1882–2005*

by Marion A. Ellis



© 2005 First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, North Carolina
All rights reserved.

Design and production by Julie Allred, BW&A Books, Inc., Durham, N.C.
Printed in the United States of America by Worzalla.
Photography by David Pegram.
Financial support provided by the Presbyterian Endowment Trust, 2002–2005, and by Session, 2002–2005.
Secretarial support by Elizabeth T. Stewart.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2005929836

*Front endsheet:* CRADLE ROLL, 2004

*First row, left to right:* John Albert Rhyne, Laura Craig Smith, Nancy White Hunter, Helen Rhyne Marvin, William Stuart Roberts, Douglas Robinson Henry, Lillian Johnstone Howland, Anne King Carpenter, Rebecca Falls, Robert Edgar McLean Jr., Gene M. Minges, Rachel Minges Rockett

*Second row, left to right:* John Craig Mason III, Mary Sue Carpenter Mason, Jean Marie Torrence, Sarah Adams Abernethy, Wilson Marshall LaFar, Kay Grigg Brown, Mary Lewis Craig Bryant, Ann Whisnant Roberts, Ruth Irene Cherry, Margaret Dunn Upchurch, A. Wilson Dunn Jr., Alice Ragan Wood, William Edward Leeper Jr., Helen Ragan Mando, Martha Barnett Beal, Virginia Huffstetler Zeigler, Martha Louise Kendrick

*Third row, left to right:* Charlton Kennedy Torrence Jr., Daniel C. Ragan Jr., Walter Watt Dickson, R. Bruce Melvin, George Robert Currence, Esther Adams Hunnicutt, Martha Rhyne Wilson, William Danford Wilson, Dorothy Wilson McKenzie

*Fourth row, left to right:* Ralph A. Dickson Jr., Thomas A. Stewart, Robert L. Adams Jr., Tom David Efird, J. Ben Morrow, John Will Parks III, Roger Arnold Stowe, J. Ralph Kendrick Jr., Frank McKinley Roberts, Rufus Manfred Johnston III, William David Lawson III

*Not Pictured:* Minor Revere Adams III, John Edgar Brison Jr., Frances Moore Cruse, Elizabeth Glenn Davis, Jean Kluttz Faires, Joseph Chalmer Gettys, Charles Armstrong Horne, Henry Graydon Horne Jr., Edward Earl Jackson, Mildred Wilson Jackson, Margaret Kempton Kelly, Paul Phifer Kincaid Jr., W. Duke Kimbrell, Daniel Senn LaFar Jr., Rose Wilson Lawing, B. Frank Matthews, Fred Morris Moss Jr., Kay Kincaid Moss, Robert Turner Moss, James Robert Rankin Jr., Ralph Smyre Robinson Jr., Ann Reid Wyatt

*Back endsheet:* Sanctuary, 2005

G25f1

*This book is dedicated to the glory of God and to the Christian witnesses, named and unnamed, who surely knew the wisdom of the Scripture:*

Stand at the crossroads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.

Jeremiah 6:16

JONES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/christianwitness00elli

## *Purpose of First Presbyterian Church 2004*

*It is the purpose of First Presbyterian Church to "present everyone mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28), because God has called us into a relationship with Him and with each other through His Son, Jesus Christ.*

## *Presbyterian Theology*

Some of the principles articulated by John Calvin remain at the core of Presbyterian beliefs. Among these are the sovereignty of God, the authority of the scripture, justification by grace through faith, and the priesthood of all believers. What they mean is that God is the supreme authority throughout the universe. Our knowledge of God and God's purpose for humanity comes from the Bible, particularly what is revealed in the New Testament through the life of Jesus Christ. Our salvation (justification) through Jesus is God's generous gift to us and not the result of our own accomplishments. It is everyone's job—ministers and laypeople alike—to share this Good News with the whole world. That is why the Presbyterian Church is governed at all levels by a combination of clergy and laity, men and women.

Presbyterians confess their beliefs through statements that have been adopted over the years and are contained in the *Book of Confessions.* These statements reflect our understanding of God and what God expects of us

at different times in history, but all are faithful to the fundamental beliefs described above. Even though we share these common beliefs, Presbyterians understand that God alone is lord of the conscience, and it is up to each individual to understand what these principles mean in his or her life.

The Presbyterian Church's denominational structure can be envisioned as a pyramid composed of groups of ministers and elders. The base of the pyramid consists of the Session, a body of ministers and ruling elders elected by the congregation. Sessions in turn elect commissioners to the Presbytery, and Presbyteries elect commissioners to the Synod and the General Assembly, which both consist of an equal number of ministers and elders.

# *Contents*

Preface xiii

Introduction xv

ONE The Beginning 1
*Early pioneer years. Long Avenue church. 1885 Cornerstone.*

TWO Founding Fathers 17
*Marietta Street church. Early leaders. The Reverend R. P. Smith, pastor, 1893–1896. West Avenue Presbyterian Church.*

THREE Years of Grace 23
*Dr. J. H. Henderlite, pastor, 1912–1940. Beloved senior minister, revered church and community leader. Visit to the Holy Land. Declining health and resignation.*

FOUR A Ministry for the War Years 39
*Dr. I. M. Ellis, pastor, 1940–1950. "Miss Bess" Jackson, secretary. Local missions. Foreign missions.*

FIVE An Adventure in Faith 49
*Dr. Harry Moffett, pastor, 1952–1967. Decision to relocate. The adventure in faith. Garrison Boulevard church.*

SIX A Peace That Passes All Understanding 73
*Dr. Moffett's Congo mission trip. Social unrest. Human relations committee.*

SEVEN Broadening the Vision 87
*Dr. James G. Stuart, pastor, 1968–1987. Goal setting. Covenant Village. Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET). The Glenn Foundation. Drama.*

EIGHT Women of the Church 107
*Early organizations. World Mission Ministry. Crisis Assistance Ministry. Female elders and deacons. Church cookbooks, 1982, 1995.*

NINE A Good Shepherd 121
*Dr. John DeBevoise, pastor, 1990–1995. Community involvement. Ragan Spiritual Enrichment Fund. Faith and Fiction book discussion. Kirkin' of the Tartans. Presbyterian Trotters. Stephen Ministry.*

TEN The Church Today 137
*Dr. David Stoker, pastor, 1997–present. Vision 2000. Joy in the Morning service.*

ELEVEN Scouting 149
*Boy Scouts of America. Girl Scouts of America.*

TWELVE Christian Education and Ministries of the Church 155
*Presbyterian Weekday School. Children's ministry. Youth ministry. Interfaith Hospitality Network.*

THIRTEEN Worship and Music 167
*The organ. The carillon and the renovation. The handbells. The choirs. Music, worship, and the Arts Series.*

FOURTEEN Looking Forward 183

EPILOGUE Message from the Pastor, The Reverend Mr. I. M. Ellis, 1948 187

Acknowledgments 189

APPENDIX Historical Timeline 193

Members of First Presbyterian Who Have Become Ministers 204

Presbyterian Church Members Who Have Received the Silver Beaver Award of the Boy Scouts of America 204

Clerks of the Session 205

Associate Ministers of First Presbyterian Church 206

Directors of Religious/Christian Education 207

Directors of Music 208

Presidents of the Presbyterian Women's Organizations 209

Honorary Life Memberships 211

First Presbyterian Church War Veterans 215

In Memoriam 219

First Presbyterian Church Marketing Committee 219

Session Roster 2005 220

Deacon Roster 2005 220

Index 221

*Eight pages of color plates fall between pages 166 and 167.*

# *Preface*

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.*

*Hebrews 12:1*

First Presbyterian Church has such abundance: spirit, congregation, staff, resources, plant. Yet it has no record of the journey that has provided this bounty. Two endearing journals of her past have been written, *History of First Presbyterian Church,* by Hugh Query (1948), and *The Presbyterian Church, a History,* by Charles Daniel (1961). Neither is complete, and at some inspections both contain inaccuracies, as most historical publications do. They, however, remain treasured pieces of our story, for they both capture the sense of God's work in His people since the earliest days of First Church.

In the fall of 2001, the present administration acknowledged the need for an updated, accurate historical record. A committee was named and directed by Session to pursue publishing a complete history of this church. The committee considered in-house efforts but soon realized that 125 years of marvelous Christian ministry deserved the recording talents of a professional author. Interviews followed. Funded by the Presbyterian Endowment Trust, a Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist, Marion Arthur Ellis, was asked to author an historical account of the First Presbyterian Church Christian community.

It is fall 2005. Mr. Ellis has written seven drafts and spent two and a half years in research. He has lived among us; he has talked to us. He has interviewed all past living ministers and many members of past administrations. He stood with us when the mysterious metal box containing material from 1895 was rediscovered after forty-one years. He has amassed a

room brimming with yellowed pages that speak our story. He has divined our past. He has observed our present, and now he has satisfied, with excellence, the charge of the Committee of History and Archives to publish a history of First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, 1882–2005.

A wonderful exponent of this book is the establishment of a room of history and archives, named the Heritage Room. It also has been funded by the Presbyterian Endowment Trust, approved by Session, and executed by the Committee of History and Archives, a subcommittee of the Building and Grounds Committee. The Heritage Room opened officially on November 7, 2004, Kirkin' Sunday. It is the responsibility of an appointed committee, acting under the authority of Session, to maintain it. Only this dutifulness can guard the past, record the present, and insure this information for the future.

The Session has accepted *A Christian Witness, History of First Presbyterian Church,* and the Committee of History and Archives presents it to you, the congregation, and to all others who have interest in knowing the story of our pilgrimage from a worshipping community of twenty-two to a congregation of 1,315.

The committee never intended for this publication to be the end of our journey, but instead the committee wished it to be the inspiration for a longer, richer trip in Christian witness for First Presbyterian.

With respect for Marion Ellis, with affection for the staff and Session who supported this effort, and with appreciation to all who have graciously contributed material and time to this project, the committee recommends *A Christian Witness.* Read, enjoy, reflect. Especially, give thanks to the Lord of all that has been and all that is to come!

Ruth McLean Brenner

COMMITTEE OF HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

*Martha Barnett Beal*
*Ruth McLean Brenner, chair*
*Walter Watt Dickson*
*A. Wilson Dunn Jr.*
*Katherine McChesney Mackie*
*B. Frank Matthews II*
*Mary Ann Thomas Patrick*
*Elizabeth Triplett Stewart*
*Charlton Kennedy Torrence Jr.*

# *Introduction*

The far-sighted leaders who founded the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia in 1882 were among the most prominent citizens of the community. Over the years the church members have continued to contribute in business, politics, medicine, education, and music as well as in civic, social, and cultural affairs. This book is only a condensation of the life and times of the church in the past 123 years.

Throughout the years, First Presbyterian ministers and members have taken leadership roles in shaping the community, even during tough times, such as the civil rights era of the 1960s. Since its founding, this church has produced mayors, legislators, and other holders of public office, and the tradition continues today. It goes without saying that First Presbyterian's membership has always included many of the community's outstanding business and industrial leaders.

Although the church has never lost its focus on Christian education through innovative Sunday schools and other church programs, it has led the way in several other areas, including various goal-setting initiatives. From its beginning, the church's outstanding music program has demanded excellence and earned national recognition. The church has led the way with its educational program for preschool children. It has sponsored programs in drama and art. It has fostered civic and social programs to assist the needy, the disadvantaged, and the helpless toward a better life. Its Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs have produced hundreds of outstanding men and women. Today's youth ministry has become one of the most active in the Gastonia area. In missionary work, the church has helped form several new local churches and chapels and historically has contributed to missions in foreign countries.

By choosing a bold new architectural home in the early 1960s, the

church made a statement about vision into the future. It sent its senior minister to the Congo in a time of strife to aid in restructuring the national church there.

The church did not rest on its laurels. It led the way in electing women to key positions. Many First Church members may not realize that through 2003 the church's Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET), founded in 1977, had distributed more than $2.6 million to various worthy causes. And, of course, the community benefits every day from its association with one of the finest retirement centers in the region, Covenant Village, which had its beginnings at First Presbyterian Church.

This book attempts to give the reader an idea not only of what has been done throughout the church's long and storied history, but also why and how it was accomplished. To accomplish this task I have read all the Session and Diaconate minutes, correspondence in the church files, and all the published newsletters I could find. I interviewed more than fifty current or former ministers, lay leaders, and others. In addition, I have read everything I could find on the history of the church and consulted numerous publications that commented on the role of the church or its members in the community.

This is the third church history I have written. Those of Charlotte's Myers Park Baptist Church and Christ Episcopal Church were built around powerful senior ministers. But when I looked back on those two histories, published in 1995 and 1997, I realized that I had not detailed the ways the lay leadership had really shaped those two great churches. So when I agreed to write the history of First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, I decided I would focus much more on the lay leaders. Little did I realize that I had chosen a nearly perfect example of a lay leader–driven church, one steered by laity who chose outstanding ministers and built an outstanding church. Most of the names of these legendary leaders are so familiar there is no need to list them here. As an outside observer, I remind the church that it has a rich connection and strong legacy to help it through many more productive years.

This book is more than a product of my thought and work. The conscientious effort—and I do mean effort—of the members of the Committee of History and Archives has enriched this book beyond my expec-

tations. The committee members more than matched my research and writing with their considerable personal knowledge and experience. They quickly learned to go beyond off-the-cuff observations; they took on assignments to research specific areas and returned with complete reports. No detail was left unchallenged, and many sections were rewritten several times to meet the standards of accuracy and readability.

This partnership of the professional writer with no personal relevant background in this church and the committee members as collaborating researchers, editors with heart, soul, and plenty of personal experience, has made this a much better book. It is unusual among church histories, and it sets a high standard for others to follow.

In the beginning stages of all my books I ask for participation by key individuals connected with the institution, but usually I receive only token contributions, leaving the bulk of the work to me, as the author. But in this church, the committee took my request to heart and dug in with gusto. As we went through draft after draft, I could feel the committee members' ownership of this history intensify. So this is truly a collaborative effort and another superlative that reflects the true nature of the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia.

Marion A. Ellis
Charlotte, North Carolina

*Chapter One*

# THE BEGINNING

## 1882–1911

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men.*

*—John 1:1–4*

The first thirteen years of First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia's history slowly unfolded as documents were pulled from a small black box on a large table in the church library. Wearing white cotton gloves to protect fragile documents, members of a waiting group were eager to get their hands on the documents that were yellow with age and had not been seen for forty years.

One of the first things the members of the group saw on one of the pages from so long ago was a handwritten note from the Reverend R. P. Smith, the pastor who had supervised placing the capsule: "I wonder if these pages will ever be read again; and if so, by whom? Deposited in the Corner Stone of the Presbyterian Church, July 19th, 1895."

On this August day in the year 2002, the answer to the question by the Reverend Smith, long passed, was being answered in the twenty-first century. The witnesses were members of the Committee of History and Archives and other representatives of the church—David Stoker, senior minister; Pat Morrow, church administrator; Barbara Voorhees, clerk of

The 1895 cornerstone and time capsule after "discovery."

Session; Tom Summer, chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee; David Pegram, church photographer; and Marion Ellis, author. They had gathered to attend the unsealing of the black box of sheet metal that had been sealed in the cornerstone of the church on Marietta Street in downtown Gastonia in 1895. It was later placed under the tower of the new church in 1962 on what became Garrison Boulevard, then a rural part of the city.

One by one the collection of twenty-two items that Smith had placed in the tiny vault, about the size of a loaf of bread, was passed among the many hands. Among the first items the audience saw was a faded envelope for Foreign Mission collection with the legend: "A Greatly Disobeyed Command. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. That whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned,' said Jesus Christ. Mark 16:15–16."

Also in the time capsule were copies of the church's 1895 newsletters containing the names of all of the members. Other material included the July 4, 1895, edition of the weekly *Gastonia Gazette* and the July 9, 1895, edition of the daily *Charlotte Observer,* Presbyterian news sheets, church pledge cards, U.S. postage stamps, minutes of the Mecklenburg Presbytery, and magazines and papers of various sorts, including a scrap of paper listing the population of Gastonia at 2,313 persons as of June 1, 1895.

Frank Matthews examines a pamphlet from the capsule. Note the white gloves.

Examining the capsule's contents in the church library, 2002. Left to right: Tom Summer, Mary Ann Patrick, Trip Stewart, Kitty Mackie, Charlton Torrence Jr.

*Contents of Time Capsule 1895*

Minutes of Spring Meeting of Mecklenburg Presbytery
Manual of the Presbytery of Mecklenburg adopted at Hopewell Church on April 24, 1890
Presbyterian Sabbath School Convention held at Olney Church on July 26, 27, and 28, 1894
Foreign mission form
Weekly offering form
History of First Presbyterian Church, organized July 16, 1882, with twenty-two members, of which ten were in the congregation as the capsule was filled
*Children's Friend* newspaper
*The Missionary*, booklet, February 1895
Church record for May 1894, September 1894, March 1895, June 1895
The lesson quarterly for Sunday school and Bible classes
"Our Fatherless Ones," pamphlet from Barium Springs, June 26, 1895
*North Carolina Presbyterian* newspaper, Wilmington, North Carolina, Thursday, July 4, 1895
"The Children's Missionary," pamphlet, July 1895

By then, Gaston County had grown to include six textile mills employing more than one thousand workers.

This time capsule was rediscovered by accident in the summer of 2002 when workers were getting ready to renovate the carillon. A cornerstone bearing the 1895 inscription was unrecognizable at first because it had been covered with mortar. Tom Summer, chairman of the church's Building and Grounds Committee, knocked off the mortar revealing the cornerstone and alerted the Building and Grounds Committee of his find.

One of the most valuable items was a two-page history of the founding of the church. It was handwritten by Reverend Smith on Presbyterian

*Christian Observer* newspaper, Louisville, KY, June 19, 1895
Letter to Davidson College alumni, July 25, 1895
List of the population of Gastonia on June 1, 1895: 2,313 souls
Two-cent stamp for 1893
Daily *Charlotte Observer* newspaper, July 9, 1895
*Gastonia Gazette,* July 4, 1895
Letter from the Peck-Smead Company, February 9, 1895, offering to sell heating system to Rev. R. P. Smith for new church
Scraps of history for R. P. Smith's posterity:
- Names of pastor's family
- Apportionments for year April 1, 1894, to April 1, 1895
- Preaching schedule
- Pledge form to build new Presbyterian Church
- Form to raise money for hiring a superintendent of home mission work
- Thank-you letter for pledges

List of contributors to contents of box
Long Brothers guarantee for the metal time capsule
Tag—box made by Long Brothers

manse stationery and dated July 10, 1895. Smith, who was pastor from 1893 to 1896, noted that when the church was formed on July 16, 1882, it had twenty-two members—sixteen from Olney Presbyterian Church, four from Union Presbyterian Church, and two by profession of faith. The charter members were R. H. Adams, Mrs. M. J. Adams, R. H. Bell, Annie Bell, Margaret Bell, Sonora Bell, B. G. Bradley, William Bradley, Dorcas Bradley, Eliza Bradley, J. H. Craig, Mary Craig, J. H. Fayssoux, Jemima Fayssoux, J. Q. Holland, Julia Holland, R. L. Johnston, C. H. Martin, Mrs. John Morrow, Elvira Smith, A. M. Smyre, and Sarah A. Smyre.

Familiar names were listed among the 219 members on the church roll

contained in the capsule. These included early Gaston founding families: Adams, Alexander, Armstrong, Bradley, Costner, Craig, Dickson, Gallant, Glenn, Gray, Holland, Hunter, Jackson, Johnston, Kennedy, Love, McLean, Page, Pegram, Ragan, Ratchford, Rhyne, Shannon, Smith, Smyre, Spencer, Thompson, Warren, Williamson, Wilson, and White. Charlton Torrence and Martha Beal, committee members sifting through the material on that day, saw the names of their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Frost Torrence and Mr. G. W. Ragan, with the date 1895. In addition, there were fourteen Bradleys, eleven Adamses, and ten Glenns.

B. G. Bradley was listed as clerk of the Session in the 1895 papers. Elders were J. Q. Holland, R. C. G. Love, J. R. Shannon, and Dr. C. E. Adams. Deacons were T. C. Pegram, chairman; John F. Love, R. T. Harper, G. W. Ragan, Dr. E. F. Glenn, F. A. Costner, T. W. Wilson, J. Lee Robinson, J. E. Curry, and J. A. Hunter. Mrs. J. F. Love was president of the Ladies Missionary Society; Mrs. T. C. Pegram, vice president; Miss Emily Adams, secretary; and Mrs. A. M. Smyre, treasurer.

Although men served as the elders and deacons, women were active and influential in the church. Nothing of any importance was done without the unofficial approval of the women of the church, usually wielding decisions through their husbands.

Reverend Smith and others included in the capsule material that gave 2002 readers a snapshot of what life must have been like in 1895 under President Grover Cleveland. The lead item on the front page of the *Gastonia Gazette* ($1.50 per annum, cash in advance) was a long, gossipy column that recounted conversation among local ladies on vacation at the beach, including a story about the supposed origin of throwing rice at weddings. (Legend had it that rice was spread so an evil bird would eat it instead of attacking the bride.) Obviously, the lack of communication technology forced a different kind of news to fill the area newspaper.

The newspaper noted such items as the price of cotton and the schedule of the Chester and Lenoir Narrow Gauge Railroad. The paper contained social notes of out-of-town visitors and folksy stories, including what must have been among the first jokes about lawyers. Advertisements for pain-relieving ointments, salves, and pills were commonplace.

First four supply pastors, 1882–1891. Revs. W. B. Corbett, J. J. Kennedy, L. R. McCormick, W. E. McIlwaine.

The Reverend R. P. Smith, who had collected and deposited the capsule in 1895, became the second full-time pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia in August 1893. Reverend C. W. Robinson was the church's first full-time pastor, serving from April 18, 1891, to November 15, 1892. Until then the church was supplied by ministers who split their time with other churches in the area. These were called supply ministers and included J. J. Kennedy (great-grandfather of C. K. Torrence Jr. and Jean Marie Torrence), L. R. McCormick, and W. E. McIlwaine. Then the Reverend

Our first church (built in 1882) with Rev. R. P. Smith, 1893.

Mr. Robinson was named as the first full-time pastor. Mr. Robinson was the uncle of Miss Elizabeth Robinson, who later became the bride of J. H. Matthews. She and her husband became major figures in the growth of First Presbyterian. Their children, Eugene, Elizabeth, Houston, and Frank, have continued the tradition of Presbyterian service and labor.

The congregation had no building when the church was first organized. The first supply preacher, the Reverend W. B. Corbett, who was also pastor of Union and Olney Presbyterian churches, had been preaching from the platform of the railroad station and in the nearby Falls House Hotel. He held church meetings in an old storehouse, or the old Gastonia Academy, until a small brick church was built. It was built on Long Avenue at a cost of $1,500 and a capacity to seat four hundred. This first church was dedicated on June 9, 1883.

The heirs of Joseph Bradley had presented to the congregation the lot for this new church, with a small additional lot purchased from J. R. Falls for $50. All of the $1,500, except $100 from Mecklenburg Presbytery and $35 from friends in Charlotte, was promptly paid by the church's small membership.

Although today we refer to the Long Street Church, there was no Long Avenue at that time. The church sat back from the road, now Airline Avenue, then part of the road to Dallas. There was an avenue of elm trees leading from the road straight to the church, wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, carriages, and buggies. The area behind the church was used for hitching horses and mules that pulled the buggies. The bell used then was still in use in 1948 in the Third Street Presbyterian Church in Gastonia.

Miss Stella Holland, daughter of Captain and Mrs. J. Q. Holland, was organist at the time of her marriage to S. N. Boyce. The marriage was timed so they might hurry from the church to the Southern depot, a few hundred yards away, to catch a southbound train. The train was an hour late, and an impromptu reception was held at the Falls House.

This church was in a thriving community of other churches and prominent homes located in a neighborhood adjoining busy Airline Avenue.

In the years when First Church was served by supply preachers, Gastonia was an infant town. With a population of fewer than three hun-

dred, it had little industry, but that was soon to change. The Chester and Lenoir Narrow Gauge Railroad ran north and south. It intersected the Atlanta and Charlotte Airline Railroad, which ran east and west. The Atlanta and Charlotte Airline began stopping in Gastonia in 1873, establishing Gastonia as a crossroad of transportation. This brought a huge industrial opportunity to the city.

The presence of the railroads not only brought industry but, in 1909, also made Gastonia the seat of county government. This was largely because citizens of Dallas, the previous county seat, decided they did not want the distractions of a railroad spoiling their pristine surroundings, a posture that won aesthetic advantage but wrought economic deterioration.

Gaston County's textile industry was in its infancy. Most of the mills were along the South Fork River or its tributaries east of the city. The South Fork supplied the waterpower that drove the mills before the com-

Manse of the church, corner of Marietta Street and Franklin Avenue, circa 1910.

ing of electricity. When electric generators became available, industry boomed.

The Baptist and Methodist congregations already had church buildings in downtown Gastonia when First Presbyterian built its small church on what was later Long Avenue. The Presbyterian laymen were among the town's most successful and respected citizens. Charter member J. H. Fayssoux, the Gastonia agent for the Chester and Lenoir Narrow Gauge Railroad, was mayor of Gastonia in 1882. Elders R. L. Johnston and A. M. Smyre were two of the town's six commissioners. Having strong community leaders as strong church leaders brought the church growth and success.

By the time the Reverend R. P. Smith arrived in 1893, lay leadership had decided that it was time for First Presbyterian to build a new meeting place. The church leaders planned a grand edifice, one that would seat one thousand people, instead of four hundred. It would be built of red brick, sandstone, and slate on South Marietta Street, in the heart of town, with a tower more than 110 feet tall. Architect Charles Wilson of Roanoke, Virginia, was engaged to design the new building. With its accompanying manse, built in 1905, it would cost $19,884, all of which would be raised by pledges alone. It would be a truly grand church structure.

The congregation had voted to pay for the construction without any fund-raising fairs, suppers, or festivals while also keeping up all pledges to the benevolent causes it had decided to support. Missions historically never suffered because of operational needs of the church.

It was a hefty order in 1894, only a year after the Panic of 1893 had sapped energy from the economy. It required strong lay leadership, which included several prominent business owners, as well as determined and dedicated clerical guidance. A committee of nine was named to study whether a new church was needed and, if so, where it should be located. Its members were A. C. Williamson, S. E. McArthur, T. C. Pegram, J. R. Shannon, A. M. Smyre, E. N. Lineberger, J. F. Love, J. B. Beal, and G. W. Lybrand.

As the study continued, the congregation found a very capable pastor in the Reverend Robert Perry Smith. He was forty-two years old when he assumed the Gastonia pastorate at a salary of $700 per year, which in-

cluded use of the manse. Smith was an educator as well as a preacher. A native of Spartanburg County, South Carolina, he had been an outstanding student at Davidson College, winning the top debating medal. After graduating in 1873, he attended Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, where he received a degree in theology. He then became president of Reidsville Female Seminary near Spartanburg, where he stayed for ten years and married Ella Reid, the only daughter of the founder of the Reidsville Seminary. In 1885, at age thirty-four, he became the first president of Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina. After three years in that post, he resigned to lead a church in Bullocks Creek, South Carolina, and then one in Blackstock, South Carolina, before moving to Gastonia in 1893.

Educated and informed, Smith believed in living his role as a minister in every way. At breakfast, he insisted upon quiet among his three children and had each read a Bible verse before the family sang a hymn. He took his job very seriously and soon captured the respect of his growing congregation in Gastonia. When the idea of a new building was proposed, it was Smith's suggestion that no benevolences should suffer while fundraising for the new building went forward. Another idea of his was to have Sunday school children raise money for the new building by each buying a brick. Today, the church Heritage Room has one of those bricks.

Smith discouraged talking or chewing gum while in worship because he said it disturbed others. He abhorred drinking and gambling and counseled young men against such vices. "He had no patience with laziness nor falsehoods," Smith's daughter wrote in *Blended Blessings,* a tribute to Smith and his wife published in 1946, ten years after Smith's death. But Smith's daughter reported that the Smiths also had a sense of humor and enjoyed playing little tricks on each other. For instance, Smith once got a laugh from his wife's frustration over continuing to receive in the mail advertisements for cures of "fits."

According to his daughter's book, Smith was a true descendant of the Scottish Presbyterians, since his clan name in Scotland had originally been McGowan. Believing it was necessary to avoid possible religious persecution, even in America, one of his forebears had given the family name Smith to immigration authorities upon his arrival.

Second four pastors, 1893–1911. Revs. C. W. Robinson, R. P. Smith, M. McG. Shields, R. C. Anderson.

Smith stayed three years at First Church in Gastonia before moving to Asheville, North Carolina, where he became superintendent of Home Missions for the Asheville Presbytery and founder of the Mountain Orphanage in Balfour, North Carolina. Smith did get to fulfill a lifelong dream by taking a trip to Rome before he died in 1936 at the age of eighty-four. At the end of his illustrious life, his last words were, "Now it is time to pray." As a measure of respect, authorities laid his body in state at the First Presbyterian Church in Asheville.

After Smith left the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia pastorate

in 1896, he was succeeded by the Reverend Malcolm McG. Shields, who served until October 1904. A number of interim pastors followed. The Reverend Robert Campbell Anderson was called in July 1905. Anderson, who often rode his horse, Victor, through the unpaved streets and tied him to the stone hitching post in front of the manse, served six years. He resigned in September 1911 to become head of the Mountain Retreat As-

The "elite" of Gastonia circa 1895. Front row: J. H. Kennedy, J. Lee Robinson. Second row: James Gallant, unknown, Chief of Police I. N. Alexander, George W. Ragan. Back row: J. E. Curry, Judge William H. Lewis, Ed Wilson, unknown.

sociation of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly grounds at Montreat, a post he held for thirty-six years. As a tribute, Montreat-Anderson College bears his name.

By Anderson's resignation in 1911, First Church of Gastonia had grown to 644 members with an annual budget of $8,242.78. Succeeding Anderson was a man who became one of First Church's most beloved senior ministers, the Reverend Dr. James Henry Henderlite. He accepted the call in December 1912. He was to stay for the next twenty-seven years.

Smith, Shields, Anderson, and all the other ministers and lay leaders during the early days of First Church's existence in Gastonia took their obligation as moral pacesetters for the church beyond the advice and counsel stage. This responsibility meant that both lay leaders and the minister often took it upon themselves to enforce standards of behavior they felt should be upheld by church members.

Like many other churches of the times, the Gastonia church followed the *Book of Church Order* requirement that all deliberations of Session meetings be kept secret. (Now Session records are open.) The Session often acted as judge and jury and cited congregants for violations that included bootlegging, adultery, dancing, fighting, fornication, gambling, swearing, and consistent absence from worship.

The elders appointed a committee of one or two to investigate complaints of non–church behavior, and the committee would report to the Session. On many occasions the Session would ask the accused party or parties to appear before the Session to explain. Usually the accused confessed and promised to reform; but if found guilty by the elders, the accused could be suspended or, in the most drastic cases, their names could be read aloud from the pulpit. They would be "unchurched," or stricken from the church roll.

These results could have serious consequences in a small town where a man's or woman's reputation might determine whether he or she succeeded in business or was ruined. The names of the accused are clearly spelled out in those old minutes. No good purpose would be accomplished by exposing them publicly, even at this late date. However, some examples might help today's church members reflect on those harsh, bygone days. From the 1885 Session minutes: "[Two members] made acknowledgments to the Ses-

sion that they had done wrong in dancing and promised to use all endeavors to not give way to the temptation again." From the 1888 Session minutes: "A. M. Smyre and J. B. Holland were an appointed committee to see [the member] about using intoxicating drinks. The committee conferred with [the member]. He confessed to his fault and promised not to do so any more, asked the Session to pray for help to overcome his weakness, the committee reported, and [this member's] request was granted."

Some of the offenses and results were bizarre, even by nineteenth-century standards. According to the 1892 minutes, after three members acknowledged they had been fighting in public and had allowed their workmen to break the Fourth Commandment (taking the Lord's name in vain), the Session judgment was that "the acknowledgments of the three brethren as well as all offenses after this should be read out by Pastor at public service."

Although the minutes reflect a diminishing number of similar secret judgments, the Session continued to hand out discipline for the next thirty years. The last one noted was dated January 1943, when a congregant was suspended indefinitely from the church rolls after admitting to adultery.

By then the church had grown to a membership of more than one thousand with a budget of $30,000.

*Gracious God, who has come to us in Jesus Christ, we thank you for your abiding presence. Your Banner for us is Love, and your Will for us is Peace. You have kept faith with us in times past and we trust you will continue with us in the times that lie ahead.*

*—From a morning prayer by the Reverend Dr. James G. Stuart, senior minister, 1969–1987*

*Chapter Two*

# FOUNDING FATHERS

*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.*

—*Psalm 127:1*

First Church of Gastonia enjoyed an early succession of strong ministers and a meteoric rise in membership, but neither would have been possible without far-sighted and influential lay leaders who had chosen to make their homes in the city that called itself "the Combed-Yarn Spinning Capital" of the world. That legacy of lay leadership has remained throughout the long history of the church. Although the church is welcoming and encourages new membership, a visitor today can often hear someone being described as the grandson or the granddaughter of a founder. The church's early families remain active today.

First Church and Gastonia grew up together, and some of the church's early members were among the city's most successful business owners, doctors, dentists, educators, and lawyers. Many city, county, and state political leaders came from within the ranks of First Church's members, including J. H. Fayssoux, the mayor in 1882, the year the church was founded. That tradition has continued through the years, with members serving as mayors, city council members, city managers, Gaston County commissioners, and state legislators.

The building of First Church's grand religious structure in 1895 could not have been possible without members who had the personal resources

to support it. After all, there were only 236 members at the time, and they were building a church to hold one thousand members. Their building cost nearly $20,000, an enormous sum for the times. A large bronze bell for the steeple was forged in a South Carolina foundry and survives today as the toll bell of the Memorial Carillon of the Garrison Boulevard sanctuary.

Over the years a few lay leaders often have acted as anonymous donors to help the church over financial difficulties, contributing to special projects and scholarships. As recently as 1990, such donors underwrote the cost of hiring an outside consultant to conduct a study of the church administratively and physically. They also have enabled young people to further their Christian education and have contributed the special funds for the establishment of the Heritage Room at the church and many other projects.

The Building and Subscription Committee that was selected for the new building in 1895 was perhaps the best example of how the lay leadership operated. It was composed of six powerful men, each a leader in business and community affairs. The chairman, George Washington Ragan, was a successful manufacturer and one of the founders of Gastonia's first textile mill in 1887 and its second in 1893. He founded the city's first bank in 1890. He was the grandfather of members John C. Mason III, the late Mary Elizabeth Torrence, Martha Barnett Beal, James Taylor Jr., and Alice Taylor Arkin.

Other committee members who were prominent business owners were R. C. G. Love, his son, John F. Love, who was church treasurer, Frank A. Costner, and Eli N. Lineberger. The last committee member, Dr. Charles E. Adams, was one of the town's few physicians and druggists and grandfather to Robert L. Adams Jr. and the late Dr. Simeon H. Adams.

The son of a farmer, G. W. Ragan had established a popular mercantile company in downtown Gastonia and had expanded his business interests into cotton manufacturing, banking, and real estate. Born on a farm in the South Point area of Gaston County, Ragan had enlisted at age seventeen in the Confederate Army and fought in the Battle of Bentonville in eastern North Carolina. After the war, he ran the family farm before starting his G. W. Ragan and Company store at South Point and then

Session, 1898. Top row: J. E. Page; J. Q. Holland, clerk. Middle row: J. R. Shannon; Rev. M. M. Shields, pastor; B. G. Bradley. Bottom row: C. E. Adams, A. M. Smyre.

adding stores at Lowell, McAdenville, and finally in Gastonia in 1886. He was a shrewd buyer and accumulated stock on his trips to Baltimore and New York City.

R. C. G. Love also had served in the Confederate Army before returning to his home in the Crowders Creek section of Gaston County. He married the daughter of a Mount Holly merchant and also entered the mercantile business in Gastonia. Love was the great-grandfather of Louise Love Keir, a fourth-generation First Church member. In 1887, Love promoted the first Gastonia textile mill and was its largest stockholder. John Franklin Love was one of his three sons, who, along with George Gray, later promoted the giant Loray Mill. The so-called million-dollar mill's

Board of Deacons, 1898. Top row: R. T. Harper; J. F. Love, treasurer; E. F. Glenn, chairman; G. W. Ragan, secretary; J. A. Hunter. Bottom row: F. A. Costner, T. W. Wilson, J. Lee Robinson, J. E. Curry, T. C. Pegram.

name was a combination of the first two letters of Love—*LO*—and the last three of Gray—*RAY*—to spell Loray. This mill was the largest textile mill under one roof in the world. John F. Love's significant contributions and unselfish service to the church and community continued.

As two of the city's leading businessmen, John Love and George Ragan often challenged each other to match contributions in church, civic, and community matters. Both held many posts in the city, and Ragan later was elected mayor.

Some of the funds for the new Marietta Street church in 1895 came from contributions for memorial stained-glass windows. Installed on three sides of the sanctuary, the nearly floor-to-ceiling windows memorialized William A. Love (1872–1890) and Susie Love (1883–1884), children of Mr. and Mrs. R. C. G. Love; Dr. Robert H. Adams (1854–1888); Mrs. Amanda Zoe Ragan (1862–1891), first wife of George W. Ragan; Robert A. Wil-

liamson (1887–1891), son of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Williamson; and Harry E. Gallant (1854–1888), son of Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Gallant. Today one of the windows is in three sections in a small chapel in the historic Dallas Park near Gaston College. Four more memorial windows are owned by two First Presbyterian Church families.

Mrs. James Robinson, the former Nancy Dean McLean, of Wilmington, North Carolina, donated another architectural treasure to the Heritage Room. She gave the Italian carved capital from one of the five columns that supported the balcony of the Marietta Street church. It is now on display in the Heritage Room.

Ragan's wise counsel in the affairs of the church extended over half a century, lasting almost until his death in 1936 at the age of eighty-nine. When John F. Love moved to Charlotte in 1911, Ragan purchased the Love home and its grounds, which adjoined the church property on Marietta Street. He donated a portion of the property to First Church, and eventually the property held a building used by the Boy Scouts.

Because of Ragan's success as chairman of the 1895 building campaign, he was asked again in 1907 to lead the building committee for West Avenue Presbyterian Church, the first daughter church established by First Church. In 1911, Armstrong Memorial Church was established as the second daughter church of First Church. (The Reverend R. Manfred Johnston IV is the current interim minister there.) When the building was completed, the family of Col. C. B. Armstrong and his business associate, A. K. Winget, requested that they be allowed to assume the remaining debt of the building as a memorial to Armstrong. A. K. Winget's grandson, Knox Winget III, serves as a ruling elder today at First Church.

Elected to the Session in 1902, Ragan also was a leader in the Men's Bible Class and was often selected to represent the church at Presbytery and Synod meetings. His sons, George W. Ragan Jr. and Caldwell Ragan, continued their father's legacy of service.

Of course, Ragan, Love, and the other members of that early building committee were not the only outstanding and dedicated lay leaders of the late 1800s and early to mid-1900s. Others included Alfred Monroe Smyre, James Quinn Holland, J. Lee Robinson, James Holland Kennedy, Dr. Enos Franklin Glenn, and John Frank Jackson. Names such as

Adams, Akers, Armstrong, Barnett, Craig, Dickson, Dunn, Efird, Falls, Garrison, Garland, Henry, Jones, Keith, LaFar, Kimbrell, Loftin, Mackie, Matthews, McLean, Patrick, Rankin, Ray, Stewart, Summerell, Taylor, Timberlake, Torrence, Watson, Wetzell, Winget, and Zeigler would also become prominent in the later life of the church in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

*O God, who weaves your providential purposes through all the changing circumstances of our lives and who works through the dedicated efforts of faithful men and women across the years, come now in our generation to renew your church. . . .*

*In the Name of Him who is Lord of the Church, even Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*—From a prayer of the people, by the Reverend Dr. Douglas Aldrich, interim pastor of congregational care, 2002–2005*

*Chapter Three*

# YEARS OF GRACE

## 1912–1940

*Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . . he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season.*

—*Psalm 1:1, 3*

In photographs, the Reverend Dr. James Henderlite appears tall, thin, and stiff-backed, with just a hint of a smile under a neatly trimmed moustache. But photographs do not convey the good judgment, thoughtfulness, kindness, and high degree of caring for others that made him a most beloved senior minister of First Presbyterian Church for more than twenty-seven years.

He was so revered that over the years his congregation gave him five new cars, including the first new Chevrolet in Gastonia, and a lifetime pension upon his retirement. Coming to the church at a time when the community was booming, Dr. Henderlite quickly assumed a major leadership role in both church and community. A tireless worker for both, he set the tone for the growth of First Church and defined its mission, giving it a new standard and a new legacy that demanded excellence, diligence, and reverence. Dr. Henderlite's strict Presbyterianism is evident today in the natural tension between traditionalists and innovators.

After the Reverend R. C. Anderson left First Church in September 1911, the church had encountered some difficulty in finding a replacement.

Dr. James H. Henderlite, pastor, 1912–1940.

Four ministers, the Reverend Dr. H. W. Burwell, the Reverend Mr. E. E. Gillespie, the Reverend Dr. C. M. Richards, and the Reverend Dr. J. H. Lacy, declined invitations to come before Dr. Henderlite accepted the call.

Two members of the pulpit committee, Arthur C. Jones and John Frank Jackson, traveled to Fredericksburg, Virginia, in the fall of 1912 to hear Dr. Henderlite preach and lead a men's Bible class. They were impressed and recommended that he preach at the church in Gastonia. (The practice of asking ministerial candidates to preach before the home congregation was a standard custom before extending the actual call of a new senior minister.) After he preached in Gastonia, the pulpit committee asked if he would accept the call, if offered. Dr. Henderlite replied,

"There is only one thing I am afraid of, and that is that I am not big enough for the job."

At the time, the church had 644 members and a budget of $8,242.78. The church was able to offer Dr. Henderlite a salary of $1,500 a year, plus a home in the manse.

A native of Smythe County, Virginia, deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Dr. Henderlite was forty years old at the time of the call to Gastonia. He and his wife, Nelle, had three small children, Virginia, Rachel, and James Jr. A graduate of Hampden-Sydney College, Henderlite also held degrees from Columbia and Louisville Presbyterian seminaries. He had been ordained in 1897 and served five years at pastorates in Accomac, Virginia, then five years at Henderson, North Carolina, and finally five years at Fredericksburg.

By all accounts, Dr. Henderlite was the quintessential Presbyterian minister. Well-educated and informed, he delivered thoughtful sermons that embodied what many felt was the word of God. One of four brothers, all of whom were ministers, he was a constant visitor in the homes of his parishioners and during their hospital stays. His responsiveness did not end there. He also believed in service to community. He immediately immersed himself in Gastonia civic affairs. Over the years he was involved in every major civic, charitable, or community effort.

When he first came to Gastonia, Dr. Henderlite "wore a short, tight-fitting coat and a collar which buttoned in the back, much on the order of the sort worn by the brethren of the Episcopal faith," Hugh Query wrote in his 1948 history of the church. Dr. Henderlite soon opted for a long-tailed frock coat with a wing collar and striped morning pants. Some church members remember having seen him in a white suit for Sunday services. In the early days, he sometimes made home visits on a bicycle. Robert L. Adams Jr., a current member, recalls one of those visits. His mother, Mrs. R. L. Adams Sr., hosted weekly bridge games with Mrs. Ed Adams, Mrs. Joe Wray, and Mrs. Hugh Query. Dr. Henderlite made an unannounced visit one afternoon during one of their games. Since card playing was not seen as an acceptable pastime in those days, the hostess was a long time recovering from her embarrassment.

Under Dr. Henderlite's direction, the church entered a boom time, co-

Men of the church on Marietta Street, circa 1916.

inciding with the boom that Gastonia had begun to experience as the combed-yarn capital of the world. Within a few short years, the church membership climbed to 1,200 and Gaston County's textile mill employment grew. In the custom of the day, the Henderlites were allowed to purchase stock in some of the mills.

By 1917, Dr. Henderlite's salary had been raised to $2,400 per year, and by 1918, the church employed the Reverend George R. Gillespie of Versailles, Kentucky, as an assistant minister at $1,500 a year. Dr. Gillespie threw himself into his new job with much zeal. First Church installed him also as the first minister of the Armstrong Memorial Church, which had been organized seven years earlier on South Broad Street under the sponsorship of First Church. It was dedicated formally in 1921.

By 1919, Dr. Henderlite was able to write in the annual report to the Presbytery:

Women of the church on Marietta Street, circa 1916.

> Church attendance has been very good at the morning services, only fairly good at night and poor at prayer meetings. There does not seem to be flagrant desecration of the Sabbath. The training of children in the homes in scripture and catechism is probably not general. This is right faithful, however, in Sabbath schools. The people show an increasing fidelity in worshipping God with substance and in supporting and extending the Gospel. The pastor's salary is $3,000. It is fully paid. This year has been one of increasing interest and organization. The church conducts four mission schools and also employs a congregational missionary who labors at various points in the town. We are not doing as much as we should perhaps.

Early in his tenure the church added a Sunday school annex, with classrooms opening off the sanctuary. Seven years later, a two-story Sunday school building with basement was constructed. The "Hut," designed for a pastor's study and offices for his secretary, assistant, other staff members, and youth, was built in the early 1920s. In 1923, Boy Scout Troop 11

was started under Dr. Henderlite's pastorate, and as the program grew, a Scout hut was built on adjoining property, donated by George W. Ragan. Troop 11's first Scoutmaster was S. Wilkes Dendy, assistant to Dr. Henderlite and the first director of young people's work.

Many improvements were made to the church plant, including a remodeling and renovation of the manse, the building of a garage to replace the barn that had served the former pastor, Dr. Anderson, and the modernization of the church kitchen. Several pianos for the Sunday school were purchased, as well as silver and china for the church dining room. A fine Kimball pipe organ was installed, the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Craig.

The heart of Gastonia's business district, circa 1920.

Men of the church on Marietta Street, circa 1922.

Miss Ola Moton was a beloved town missionary. Sabbath schools were taught by devoted ladies in the church. Miss Hattie Stowe and Mrs. Ed Adams taught catechisms. Miss Stowe arranged her first-grade class at Central School to include Presbyterian children. If they didn't learn the catechism on Sunday, she taught it to them on public school time.

Progress continued over the years. By 1921, the annual report reflected 1,211 members and a budget of $55,076 when the Sunday school building had to be constructed to accommodate religious education. By 1926, the budget had grown to $59,321 and Dr. Henderlite's salary had been increased to $5,000. He had been at the church for thirteen years, and many of the members of the congregation felt it was time he be awarded a sabbatical.

Dr. Henderlite had often talked about wanting to visit the Holy Land. A few key congregants contributed $2,100 (raised largely through the generosity of J. Lee Robinson) to cover Dr. Henderlite's expenses on a fourteen-week trip to the Holy Land, which included a number of destinations in England, Europe, and the Mediterranean.

The Monday, May 17, 1926, edition of the *Gastonia Gazette* carried a story with the headline: "Farewell Service at Presbyterian Church." Before his sermon on the previous Sunday night, Dr. Henderlite "expressed his genuine appreciation of the generous spirit of the congregation, which

had enabled him to realize this ambition of his life." To emphasize this point, his sermon was titled "The Good Shepherd," based on John 10:14, the parable of the shepherd making sure that not one sheep would be lost.

Dr. Henderlite left New York for England the following Saturday, May 22, on the cruise ship *Leviathan*. He sailed among more than 2,500 passengers. He had told First Church member Hugh Query, editor of the *Gastonia Gazette,* that he would mail home reports Query could publish if he so desired.

The editor was delighted to receive the first report, dated June 2, from London and was especially delighted when Dr. Henderlite continued his travelogues over the next two months. In all Henderlite mailed twenty-one reports, each more than two thousand words long, a total of more than forty thousand words. These articles are thought to have been collected and published in a booklet, but apparently the booklet did not survive. The handwritten articles are archived in the Heritage Room, along with letters to Mrs. Henderlite, and the printed articles are on microfilm of the *Gaston Gazette* at the Gaston County Public Library. Each article included fascinating descriptions of people and places that Dr. Henderlite encountered. Good history lessons laced with political and social commentary, they were delightfully humorous, especially considering that they were written by a Presbyterian minister who was quite reserved.

Dr. Henderlite's messages from Europe give us a rare glimpse of the kind of person he was. It is obvious from reading his reports that he was not only a minister, but also a scholar. Before he approached a famous historic site, he conducted thorough research. His letters home instruct the reader in history, religion, anthropology, archeology, and geography. Reading them is better than reading a history book, because Dr. Henderlite spiced his reports with quips and quotes. His style was breezy, not stiff. We can only imagine the readers back home, both *Gazette* subscribers and First Church parishioners, eagerly awaiting the next letter from abroad.

Since there are no known recordings of Dr. Henderlite's sermons, prayers, or talks, his reports from abroad give us an insight into his per-

sonality and approach to life. Only highlights of his trip are included here.

In the first report, Dr. Henderlite told of visiting England and being intrigued by the old churches and cathedrals that held much historical interest. He wrote that many of them dated from about the middle of the eleventh century, when the Normans invaded England. From Edinburgh, he described the picturesque beauty of the Scottish countryside. He reveled at being in the heart of Presbyterianism.

His reports from Paris easily captured Dr. Henderlite's sense of wonderment. He started his letters from there with a long description of some of the contents of the Louvre, noting that it covered forty-five acres and contained the largest and finest collection of paintings and statuary in the world. He quickly learned to love the outdoor cafés and fine food, but he made fun of his inability to be understood. "The people in general here cannot understand their own language when they hear it spoken," he reported.

> Over and over again I have had this experience with them myself. In my polished and faultless French I have asked some simple question or commented on some familiar every day matter that even the children should be acquainted with only to be met with polite but hopeless inability to understand what I am talking about. This is true practically everywhere I go and among all classes of people—shopkeepers, waiters, policemen, taxi drivers, hotel clerks and passing pedestrians. They are very courteous about it, being French, and are probably no little embarrassed by their ignorance. I hope that maybe some good will come of my visit, and that the government of France realizing that something is sadly wrong with the present system of education will take early steps toward remedying the situation. A rather surprising feature of this, it may be said, is the fact that I find my English is really better understood in Paris than my French. One would naturally think they would learn their own language first. Just as a sample, by the way, of how they fail to recognize their own tongue, I ordered poached eggs,

> toast and coffee the other day, speaking in the most finished and careful manner, just as it is in the books on "How to master French in three days," and the very bright and attractive waitress brought me a plate of soup and a newspaper.

Dr. Henderlite also had a wonderful time visiting the treasures and wonders of Versailles and Fontainebleau.

In Rome Dr. Henderlite found several items that heightened his desire to visit the Holy Land. He visited the Scala Santa, or the Holy Stairs, which were supposedly taken from Jerusalem and were reported to be the very steps that Jesus went up to enter the judgment hall of Pilate. He also visited the prison where Paul was supposedly kept before his death and the tomb where Peter was said to be buried. He spent many hours at St. Peter's Basilica, marveling over the many treasures there.

After a visit to Naples, Dr. Henderlite boarded the USS *California* for a trip across the Mediterranean Sea through the Greek Isles to Constantinople (now Istanbul), Turkey. Then, by rail and automobile, he went on to Damascus, Syria, and to Beirut, Lebanon. He would take a guided tour by automobile to the Holy Land.

In the September 6, 1926, edition of the *Gastonia Gazette,* readers received Dr. Henderlite's first report from the Holy Land. Written on August 9 from Jerusalem, the article sparkles with his excitement at finally reaching his long-awaited destination.

The trip to Galilee, he wrote,

> was a most memorable experience by reason of the beauty and grandeur of much of the scenery, the picturesqueness of the country with its shepherds and flocks of sheep and long eared black goats, its Bedouin Arabs and their camps, its camel trains and donkeys . . . its occasional wide stretching fields of green Egyptian corn or its harvest wheat fields in which an occasional woman would be seen, like Ruth of old, gleaning the scant wheat stalks that had escaped the sickles of the harvesters.

After seeing where the River Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee, Dr. Henderlite had lunch at Tiberius and then went on to Cana. "Nazareth

was, of course, one of the outstanding places in our itinerary, the boyhood home of Jesus," he continued.

> It is the best town in Galilee, which is not saying a great deal for it. It is a fair sized town, but very dirty and full of poverty and squalor. There we saw one of the places where genuineness is hardly questioned, "Mary's Well." You can almost count on your fingers the places in Palestine mentioned in the Bible that can be definitely identified today. But all seem agreed that this is the very well from which Mary as a young maiden and later as wife and mother used to carry water for the needs of the household. We saw the women filling their jars with water, or standing about chattering and gossiping, or leaving the well, which is really a spring, with the heavy jars balanced on their heads, just as Mary did, no doubt, 1900 years ago.

From Nazareth, Dr. Henderlite journeyed to Jacob's well. "To no place in Palestine had I looked forward more eagerly than to the well of Jacob," he wrote. "It is another of the famous Bible spots whose genuineness is unquestioned." Dr. Henderlite drank of the water and found it "excellent, clear and cold," and as he drank he wrote that he thought of the "thousands of various creeds and bloods" who had drunk from it since Jesus.

He told of visiting the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives and of a short rowboat ride on the River Jordan. Presumably the water he brought back to Gastonia, which he used to baptize infants in First Church for years, was from the River Jordan.

Continuing with his Holy Land report, Dr. Henderlite showed his sense of humor: "On the way to Jerusalem we passed the Inn of the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan took the wounded man to this inn and gave the host two pence to pay his hotel bill. After we had looked at the inn we decided that, as is said to be usual with hotel keepers, this one had over charged the Samaritan."

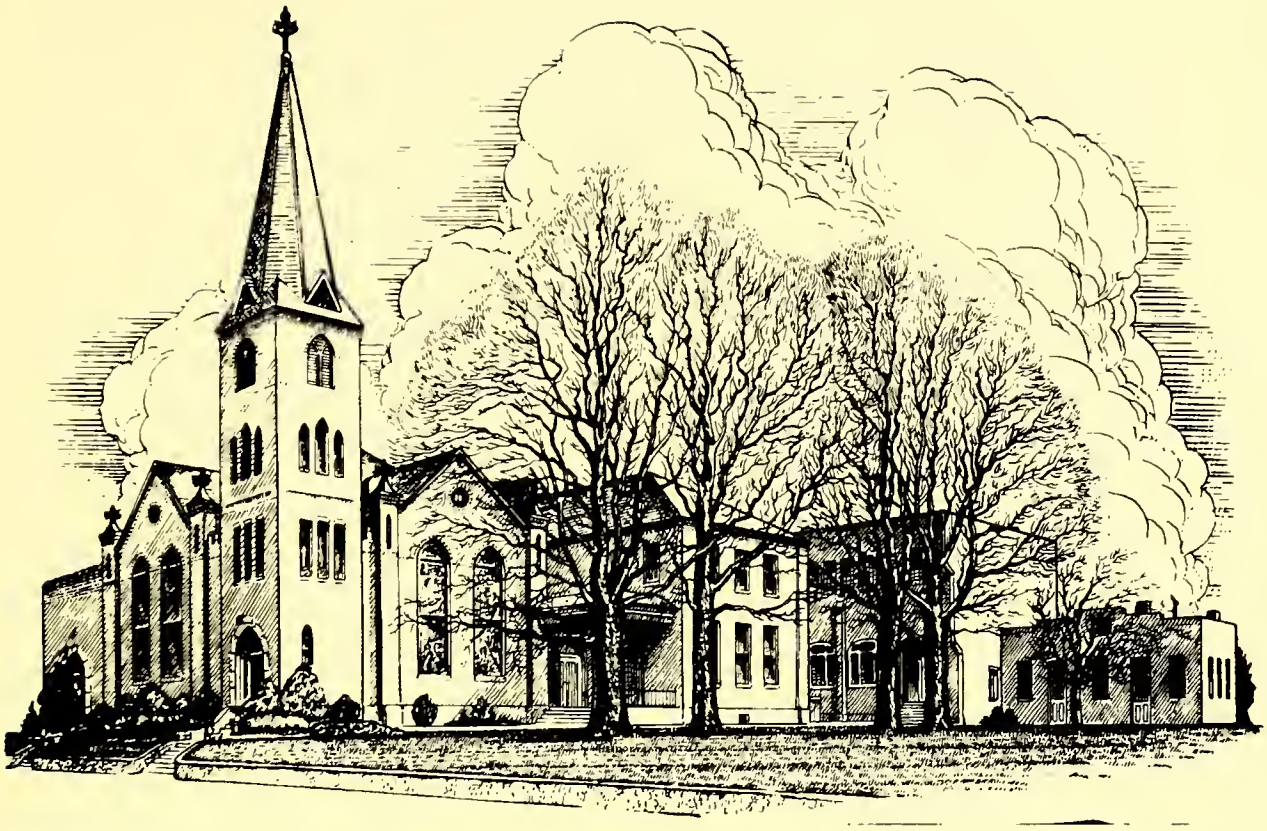
His last Holy Land trip report told of his visit to Bethlehem and then on to Egypt for his first camel ride, which he managed without any problems. He closed his reports:

> And will I be glad to get back home? If anyone asks you, do not hesitate to answer yes. It has been a truly wonderful trip from start to finish and I have enjoyed it beyond the power of expression. But mid pleasures and palaces there is no place like home: and of all the many interesting countries I have seen, there is none I would swap for the good old United States. These other lands are fine to visit, provided you don't have to stay too long in some of them. They can interest and amuse you and often they can teach you a great deal, for there are some things we can learn from them and be none the worse. But I am glad I am an American, and when it comes to living day by day, year in and year out, there is no place in the world like the United States.

Dr. Henderlite returned home on the *Leviathan* along with General John J. Pershing and 2,578 others, then a record number of civilian passengers at one time on any cruise ship. He was renewed and refreshed. The church continued to grow.

Dr. Henderlite's pastorate was full of service to his congregation, the people of his community, and to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. He became president of the Gastonia Rotary Club, chairman of the board of Garrison General Hospital, a high-ranking member of the Masonic Lodge, and a member of the Inter-racial Council in Gastonia. He was a major figure in the Chamber of Commerce, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the public library, and the Christmas Seal Committee. He served on the boards of trustees at Presbyterian Junior College in Maxton, Montreat College, Queens College in Charlotte, and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. He was a member of the Committee of Forty-four, a policy-making organization of laymen and ministers of the Southern Presbyterian Church. He served on the General Assembly's Stewardship Committee and the Christian Education Board. He was moderator of the Synod of North Carolina in 1923 and served as a commissioner to General Assembly many times. Davidson College conferred upon him a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1918. Dr. Henderlite was one of the few Gastonians to be listed at that time in *Who's Who in America*.

But the good times were not to last. The church was hit hard by the



First Presbyterian Church on Marietta Street, pen and ink rendering circa 1930.

Great Depression that began in October 1929, and the congregation had difficulty meeting the budget. At his request, in 1931, Dr. Henderlite's salary was reduced to $5,000—the 1926 level—and the church trimmed the budget to $37,622. In 1934, his salary was $4,000 and the church budget fell below $20,000.

By January 1938, the nation had begun to prosper again, and Dr. Henderlite was honored in a special ceremony on his twenty-fifth anniversary as minister of First Church. "You have been mighty good to me," he told his congregation. "These twenty-five years have been the happiest of my life. There have been no discord, no factions, no differences, no splits or quarrels in the church in this time. No one has said an unkind or cross word to me in all this time and harmony and satisfaction have prevailed." Henderlite recalled that he had preached 2,500 sermons, baptized 780 infants, performed 257 marriages, conducted 383 funerals, and made between 25,000 and 30,000 home or hospital visits.

The Rotary Club also honored Dr. Henderlite with a special program

at the Armington Hotel. "He has been an aggressive leader in everything pertaining to the general welfare and moral uplift of our community," Rotarian John R. Rankin told the crowd.

In his twenty-seventh year of his ministry at First Church, Dr. Henderlite fell ill with influenza and spent several months in Florida in attempts to recover. But by June 1940 it was obvious that he could not continue, and he tendered his resignation effective July 1, 1940. The *Gastonia Gazette* paid tribute to him in an editorial: "By virtue of his long period of faithful and devoted service, Dr. Henderlite has become the Nestor of the pastors of this city, and, perhaps, of the county." (Nestor was a legendary Greek figure known for his long life and wisdom.) The congregation reluctantly voted to accept his resignation, awarding him a pension of $1,800 per year for the rest of his life. Although he attended services occasionally after his resignation, he never fully recovered physically and died on January 17, 1942, at the age of seventy. In his honor, the name of the Men's Bible Class, which he had taught for many years, was changed to the Henderlite Bible Class.

His daughter, Dr. Rachel Henderlite, received her Ph.D. from Yale Divinity School and became the first ordained female in the Presbyterian Church. For many years, she was professor of Applied Christianity, or religious education, at the General Assembly Training School in Richmond, later named Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Some classes at Union Theological Seminary were added to her teaching schedule. Rachel resigned her position in Richmond to become a professor at Austin Seminary in Texas. She was a popular keynote speaker and lecturer, whose keen sense of humor endeared her to audiences. She authored several books and study guides and chaired important General Assembly committees. Among her books were *A Call to Faith* and *We All Are Barabas.* She wrote texts for Covenant Life Curriculum—the staple church-schools literature for Presbyterians. She also was a prominent participant in the first march advocating desegregation in the South.

In February 1946, the church presented a $10,000 scholarship endowment in Dr. James Henderlite's name to Union Theological Seminary of Richmond.

Dr. Henderlite's other daughter, Virginia, became a director of Christian education and married the Reverend Frank Jones, a Presbyterian minister. Their son, James H. Jones, has served as a deacon and is presently an elder at First Church, Gastonia.

*Father, we pray for our world; may there be peace on earth goodwill toward all. We thank you for those who reach out to others, who work and labor for peace and goodwill among all people. Bless their labors.*

*—From a Christmas prayer, December 5, 1999, by the Reverend Dr. Wilson P. Rhoton Jr., interim associate minister for congregational care, 1997–1999*

*Chapter Four*

# A MINISTER FOR THE WAR YEARS 1940–1950

*How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.*

—*Psalm 84:1–2*

The Reverend Irving M. Ellis, who had been assistant minister to Dr. Henderlite, was chosen by the congregation to succeed him on September 8, 1940, after illness forced Dr. Henderlite to resign. At the time, it was a very unusual move for a Presbyterian church to promote an assistant to the senior position. Now such an action is prohibited by the General Assembly.

The Reverend Ellis led the church through the stressful years of World War II and into the Korean War era. He was a popular youth leader, but his real strength lay in his talent as a gifted singer and musician. He used his musical background to attract the first of many talented musicians to First Church as staff members.

The Reverend Ellis' education and background were a departure from the norm in the church's selection of senior ministers. Most of his predecessors had been Southerners, many of them educated at Davidson or other Southern colleges or universities. Ellis was a native of a Chicago

Rev. Irving M. Ellis, pastor, 1940–1950.

suburb and received his training at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago before going on to Roanoke College and then to Union Theological Seminary in Richmond.

The Reverend Irving Ellis, called "Deac" by close friends, first came to Gastonia in 1923 as part of a group of Union seminary students visiting First Church to help with the music program. He was called in 1937 as assistant pastor and music director and was asked to work with the youth under Dr. Henderlite. He organized the junior high and senior high youth divisions meeting on Sunday nights in the Hut, a small building beside the education building on Marietta Street. The Reverend Ellis and his wife taught Vacation Bible School each year. The Reverend Ellis also accompanied the youth to summer camps at Camp Cherokee in the Kings Mountain Battleground and to the Montreat Youth Conferences. He was

a successful youth minister and is recalled today by his current Presbyterian parishioners for his youth leadership. Alice Wood, who was a teenager during Ellis' tenure at First Church, said, "He was kind, but firm and strict. I remember him as being very talented musically. He taught us songs and he would play the marimba for us." Helen Mando said, "He was wonderful. I just loved him."

The Reverend Ellis soon became known among members of his congregation for his unusually long sermons. Young people in the balcony used to compete at guessing how long he would preach. They would time him from the beginning of his sermon to the end, when the Reverend Ellis said, "Let us pray." He used to call on the late John Akers' father, the Reverend Dr. W. W. Akers, a retired minister, to deliver the benediction at the end of every Sunday morning worship service. (The Reverend

Junior Choir at Marietta Street church, 1946. Front row: Mary Thompson, Norma Jean Yarbrough, Margaret Boyce, Theresa Ward, Katherine Anthony, Gail Cherry, Catherine Morrow, Kay Faust, Judy Jackson, Jimmy Giles, Ralph Falls Jr., Larry Giles, Jimmy Walton, Jo Ann Kluttz, Bobby Gray. Back row: Florence Robinson, Nancy Thompson, Doris Ann Yarbrough, Douglas Boyce, Mack Giles, Jean Etheridge, Sarah Adams, David Mackorell, Sally Dozier, Ruby Neal Ford, Irene Cherry, Charles Loftin III, Betty Jean Glenn, Kay Ellis.

Wedding of Margaret Kempton and Roy Kelly, February 20, 1943, Marietta Street church.

Dr. Akers served as supply minister at Armstrong Memorial Presbyterian from September 1942 to February 1943.)

The Reverend Ellis had a polished tenor voice. He was an accomplished pianist and organist and loved to play the marimba, although he played only in the evening service and on other occasions, never at the eleven o'clock worship service. Occasionally, he performed at public functions outside the church. He also was a powerful swimmer with a Johnny Weissmuller physique. Ellis and his wife, Lulawill, had two girls and two boys, worked well with young people, and were well liked by them. Mrs. Ellis was a talented musician in her own right and served as organist when

Young People's Council, May 1954, at home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gordon (Mrs. Gordon is playing the piano).

needed. Under the Reverend Ellis' leadership, Sunday night youth fellowships were started. Robert and Lucille Gordon were lay leaders who entertained youth groups at "Singings" in their home and at a river house.

Beloved church secretary "Miss Bess" Jackson began serving under the Reverend Ellis in 1941 as the only office staff member. Longtime members recall that Miss Bess wore a hearing aid around her neck and would hold the telephone receiver upside down to talk. In the closing years of Dr. Henderlite's administration, First Church member Neale Patrick, then a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, became editor of a newly created weekly newsletter, the *Beacon*. When Miss Bess arrived, she took over as editor of the *Beacon* and served it faithfully until 1964.

"Miss Bess" P. Jackson.

In 1942, Katherine (Kitty) McChesney was employed as director of religious education. She married H. S. Mackie in 1944. In 1945 Mary Olive Walker became director of

religious education. Miss Walker later became a McChesney also, when she married Kitty's brother, Charles. (The position of DRE was changed by the General Assembly to Director of Christian Education [DCE] in the 1960s.) The Reverend Linwood Cheshire was called as associate minister to the Reverend Ellis and served from 1944 until November 1947.

Aided by the fact that the Reverend Ellis was an accomplished musician, the music program at First Church flourished under his leadership. Miss Helen Hubbard, a graduate of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, became the church's first female director of music. She was followed by Martha Enck, who became director of music in 1942. After nine months in the post, she married Bill Loftin, assistant Sunday school superintendent, whose grandfather was John Frank Jackson, a charter member. Emma Binns Bercaw of Roanoke, Virginia, followed Loftin as music director. Both Mrs. Loftin and Mrs. Bercaw were also graduates of Westminster Choir College.

During the Reverend Ellis' pastorate, three local missions, Adams Memorial Church and Piedmont and Mountain View chapels, were established with the help of great lay leadership. At Piedmont Chapel, Wade Williford, Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Gordon, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Moss, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Moss, Verne Shive, and Mrs. John Wilkins were outstanding lay leaders.

It was also during the Reverend Ellis' pastorate that First Church attracted an unusual pair of new members, Hilda Kreutzer and her mother, two Jewish women who had escaped the Holocaust. Hilda Kreutzer had come from Germany to Gastonia with her husband Adolf and her mother. A piano teacher, Hilda was asked to play for the Women's Bible Class at First Church in early 1942. When she heard soloist Roy Sudduth sing "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," she was so overcome with emotion that she decided to join the church. Her mother also joined. Her husband never did. Upon Hilda's death in 2002, she left an endowment of more than $450,000 for the Crisis Assistance Ministry for Christians and Jews in Greater Gastonia, Inc. Roy Sudduth's granddaughter, Katie Clark, continues the tradition as a musician in the church today. She sings in the choir, plays the flute and handbells, and directs the youth handbell

Fred A. Ratchford, deacon, elder, and clerk of Session.

Hilda Kreutzer, convert to Christianity and benefactor of Crisis Assistance Ministry, 2003.

choirs. Leslie Lewis, a gifted handbell soloist, also directs children's handbell choirs. Miss Lewis performs regularly for First Church and is also asked to perform in area churches.

Foreign missions were important in the life of the church in the Reverend Ellis' day. But an unusual situation arose in July 1950 when the church attempted to give $2,500 to the Presbyterian Church Foreign Missions to buy a new Jeep for the missionary in western Brazil, the Reverend Reichardt Taylor. The following inscription was to go on the Jeep: "Given to Presbyterian World Missions in Brazil in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frost Torrence and Mr. and Mrs. James H. Kennedy by Mr. and Mrs. Charlton K. Torrence, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Julian, Mr. and Mrs. George Gray, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. John O. Durham and Mrs. Marie Torrence Lattimore." When World Missions personnel discovered that Brazilian law would prevent the importation of a new vehicle, the olive drab Jeep was driven around Nashville by church personnel until it could be reclassified as a used vehicle and then shipped to Brazil.

Ellis left First Church to become director of religious education in the Appalachia Synod at Knoxville. Upon his resignation in December 1950, to be effective January 1, 1951, he was presented with the keys to a new Pontiac. The gift was a sign of great affection from members of the church.

Controversy among some members of the First Church congregation over the Reverend Ellis' manner and style in leading the church was obvious in the resolution accepting his resignation in 1950. "He has hewn the line, let the chips fall where they would," it read in part. "He has given us the pure and unadulterated gospel, not tainted with the malevolence of modernism." King College in Bristol, Tennessee, conferred upon him the Doctor of Divinity degree.

A reminder of the controversy was in a June 1992 issue of the church's *Chimes* newsletter reporting the death of Dr. Ellis at age ninety-three. It said, "Dr. Ellis, in addition to his genial personality, also had a reputation as one who 'called things as he saw them.' Some members recall how during his sermons he was direct enough to cite unchristian and immoral behavior of specific members of the community who were sitting in the congregation."

Ellis also had many loyal friends, and he was known as a compassionate pastor who took extremely good care of his flock. A resolution marking his passing stated: "Particularly during the trying days of World War II when some of our people were called on to pass through the valley of the shadow of death because their brave young men paid the supreme sacrifice on a far off field of battle, in Europe, the Pacific, or on some barren waste of coral and sand, Mr. Ellis was a source of comfort and strength to those bereaved parents." (A list of veterans who served in various wars is included in the appendix to this volume.)

*We know there are those who call us enemies and who pray not for us but against us. We pray for them today, as difficult as it is to do so, because you have told us, in Jesus Christ, to pray for our enemies and to overcome evil with good. Help us to know how to*

*pray appropriately for our enemies and how to hate what is evil without being vindictive and embracing evil ourselves. Make us a people loyal to our life and mission, our worship and witness.*

*We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

*—From a prayer for the people by the Reverend Mr. Frank Mayes, associate pastor, 1980–1989*

*Chapter Five*

# AN ADVENTURE IN FAITH

## 1952–1965

*For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible with you.*

—*Matthew 17:20*

*And upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

—*Matthew 16:18*

A fourteen-member pulpit committee, headed by Hugh A. Query, was named to lead the search for a successor to the Reverend Ellis. Fourteen months later, on March 2, 1952, the call went out to the Reverend Dr. Harry M. Moffett Jr., pastor of the University Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, a church that served the University of Texas community. Moffett, then forty-two, had been in Austin since 1945, having moved there from First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Missouri, the site of the main campus of the University of Missouri. A native of Fredericksburg, Virginia, Moffett came from a long line of ministers and missionaries. Not only was his father, Dr. H. D. Moffett (whose final pastorate was at Davidson College for twelve years), a Presbyterian minister, but both of his grandfathers and a brother, Polk Moffett, were Presbyterian ministers as well. He also had uncles and aunts who were missionaries to China and Brazil.

Dr. Harry Moffett, pastor, 1952–1966.

After graduating from Davidson in 1931, where he was a classmate of future U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Dr. Moffett worked as an auto mechanic and teacher for more than a year before deciding to enter Union Theological Seminary, which, along with the Presbyterian School of Christian Education, is a theological-education institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) located in Richmond, Virginia. After receiving his Doctor of Theology degree there, Moffett was called to serve four small churches in and around Johnston City, Tennessee. He stayed there until 1940. He left to become pastor of the Liberty Presbyterian Church in Liberty, Missouri, near Kansas City, where he stayed until taking the Columbia post.

As a result of his pastorate in Columbia, he formed a friendship with University of Missouri football coach Don Farrot, and later in Austin forged the same relationship with the University of Texas football coach Blair Cherry. Moffett was a sportsman and an athlete himself.

According to legend, Dr. Moffett happened to be visiting his Davidson alma mater when D. R. "Doc" LaFar, a First Church lay leader, was vice chairman of the Davidson College board. LaFar sought advice from the president of Davidson, Dr. John Rood Cunningham, who asked Dr. Moffett to consider taking the First Church pastorate. To please Dr. Cunningham, Dr. Moffett made the trip to meet with the pulpit committee, although he felt the church had problems and he had reservations about accepting a call there. The pulpit committee immediately liked Moffett, considering him a polished and educated minister who spoke with depth, frequently quoting religious intellectuals such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Once Dr. Moffett and his wife Margaret made the decision to move to Gastonia, their adjustment was smooth and satisfying. The congregation welcomed them with open arms and feted them with church suppers. At one of these, pulpit committee member W. L. Wetzell Jr. dedicated a takeoff of the poem "Land of the Long Leaf Pine" to the Moffett family:

> Here's to the land of the long leaf pine
> And here's to the Lone Star State.
> Each one claims to be the best,
> And both of them are great.

But the Texans quit their boasting
'Though was pretty hard to stop it
When we lasso-ed and put our brand
On Dr. Harry Moffett.
They claim that we are rustlers
And in Texas that's a crime
But we hope they will forgive us
If we'll only give them time.
We know that they will be good sports
And won't raise too much fuss
For they know that we are getting
What really belonged to us.
So we welcome all the Moffetts
To our city, state and church.
We'll always strive to help you,
Never leave you in the lurch.
To Harry Jr., Peggy, Margaret,
Ann Stuart, Harry too,
We've already learned to love you,
And we hope you'll love us too!

The *Gastonia Gazette* introduced Dr. Moffett with a profile on June 14, 1952. In the article, Moffett said he and his family had found the people in the city extremely friendly and likeable. "Our association here has been very good," he said, "and we think that Gastonia is an excellent place."

Moffett agreed to come to Gastonia for a salary of $7,200 per year, plus an annuity of 7.5 percent of his salary and a one-month vacation. The church also bought a house for him on Carolina Avenue, allowing him to build equity as others before him had not been able to. He told the pulpit committee that he would stay seven or eight years.

Following the practice of allowing senior ministers to form their own personnel teams, Dr. Moffett hired Mrs. L. C. Majors as director of Christian education (DCE) in October 1952, but she was able to serve only a few months. Eubank Taylor, considered one of the outstanding DCEs in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, then came in July

Dr. J. N. Brown, associate minister, 1954–1966.

1953 as DCE. A native of Anderson, South Carolina, she was a graduate of Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia. She came to First Church in Gastonia from the First Presbyterian Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The Reverend J. N. Brown was called as associate pastor in October 1954. He had served as an associate minister in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

A major role in the life of the church during the mid-1950s was filled by a succession of volunteers known as pastor's aides. These dedicated women worked with the church staff to gather and distribute the names of visitors, bereaved members, and new members to Women of the Church circle leaders who would then assign circle members to call upon those listed. For instance, Esther (Mrs. Minor R.) Adams, a pastor's aide in 1955, noted that the circle members made 3,499 visits. Tommye (Mrs.

Ralph) Falls also was distinguished by her constant and numerous pastor's aide visits.

When Dr. Moffett became senior minister, the church's fifty-seven-year-old physical plant was in dire need of modernization. Other growth in downtown Gastonia severely restricted the possibility of church expansion. Dr. Moffett was in the pulpit a short time before he began to consider what to do about the church's physical condition and its location. The membership had grown to 1,323 with a budget of $123,806.

On December 13, 1952, a joint meeting of the executive committees of the Session, the Diaconate, and Women of the Church representatives Mrs. Hugh Query and Mrs. J. N. Summerell unanimously decided that the church should plan to remain on its present site. However, the committee urged that immediate steps be taken to bring the plant to adequate efficiency and size. The committee also decided to purchase strategic property, looking to future colonization of the church in an outlying area of the city.

Vacation Bible School, June 1952.

By October 18, 1953, the charge to the executive committees of the Session and Diaconate and the outgoing and incoming presidents of the Women of the Church had changed "to recommend the advisability of remaining at the present location or moving or colonization." In the meantime, the church had hired a Charlotte architect to look at the feasibility of modernizing the sanctuary on Marietta Street. The architect discovered that the balcony would have to be condemned, that remodeling the sanctuary would cost $170,000, and that the size of the property left no room for a badly needed nursery.

In the search for a site to be used for possible colonization or new construction, a planning and development committee was named, with D. R. LaFar as its chairman. Two church trustees, Ralph Falls and Ralph S.

Presbyterian house party at Camp Gallant, Montreat, North Carolina, June 1953. First row: Dr. Harry Moffett, Mrs. S. A. Robinson, Mrs. J. R. Hudson, Miss Bess Jackson, Mrs. Murphy, Miss Georgia Copeland. Second row: Mrs. Walter G. Rhyne, Mrs. Louie M. Lattimore, Mrs. J. H. Matthews, Mrs. Hugh Query, Mrs. E. L. Patterson, Miss Corinne Puett.

Robinson Sr., were appointed as a site search committee. They discovered a 10.95-acre tract available in the southeastern section of the city, an area surrounded by many members' homes and one that a telephone executive who was a member of the church suggested would fit the future growth of Gastonia. The site on Kendrick Drive (later renamed Garrison Boulevard) was considered way out in the sticks, but the church voted on February 20, 1955, to buy it for $32,580 from the heirs of Joseph Fisher Ratchford, the grandfather of church member Bonnie Blair and former elder William C. Ratchford. Ratchford also was great-grandfather to David Ratchford, a present member, and Robert W. Ratchford, who became a Presbyterian minister. In 1957, two smaller parcels were purchased from the Owens family to round out the site at twelve acres.

Another part of the church property was purchased from the Janie Kendrick family. Janie and Ralph Kendrick Sr. were brother and sister. Ralph Kendrick Jr. is still a member. Ralph Sr., Janie, and her son, John Cleveland Owens Jr., known as J. C., are all deceased. J. C.'s son, Steve Owens, has been the maintenance supervisor since 1983. "I see this as my calling," Steve Owens said. "It means a lot for me to work and care for the church that I grew up in and was built on part of the property that belonged to my family."

Meanwhile, debate continued on whether to rebuild on the Marietta Street site or move to the suburbs. Finally on April 7, 1957, the congregation voted by secret ballot 410 to 115 to move to the new site. After the vote, the congregation sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

The move was controversial, because some First Church members regretted leaving the downtown area where other main-line churches were located and many First Church members still lived. Some members feared that in a new building on the city's fringe, the church would lose members who would chose to attend one of the other downtown churches. Those fears were allayed when the congregation lost only a few members.

Building a new sanctuary turned out to be a unifying experience and a tremendous turning point in the effectiveness of the church's ministry. It may have created the most energizing burst of enthusiasm since the building of the Marietta Street sanctuary.

With the decision to move made, the work of choosing an architect

and building contractor and raising the funds necessary to pay for it began in earnest. In July 1957, D. R. LaFar was named chairman of a Steering Committee. He was joined by a group consisting of M. R. Adams, John M. Akers, L. G. Alexander, R. A. Dickson, W. B. Garrison, Ralph S. Robinson Sr., and Fred L. Smyre Jr. Robinson was named treasurer.

Ralph H. Falls was named chairman of the Building Committee with the dedicated assistance of Mrs. J. H. Matthews (Elizabeth), Mrs. J. N. Summerell (Margaret), M. R. Adams, W. D. Lawson III, and W. R. Sparrow. Subcommittees were named to handle specific sections, including organ, memorials, properties, landscaping, worship, education and recreation, fellowship and service facilities, and the all-important finance committee. (A complete list of all committees and members appears in the Appendix of this volume.)

The committee considered several possible architects. After conferring with representatives of area churches that recently had built new sanctuaries, including Covenant Presbyterian of Charlotte and First United Methodist of Gastonia, the committee met with nationally renowned church architect Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia and asked him to submit preliminary sketches. Wagoner, who was known for his beautiful sanctuaries, had designed several modernistic churches as well as the interior furnishings of the Protestant and Catholic chapels at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

On August 11, 1957, Chairman Falls announced that Wagoner had been chosen as the architect for First Church's new building and that the next phase, choosing the design, would begin. Meanwhile, W. B. Garrison, secretary-treasurer of the Gastonia Coca-Cola Bottling Company, was chosen as chairman of the finance committee. (Garrison was a member of the State Highway Commission; later Garrison Boulevard was named for him.) The church set out to raise as much money as possible to fund the new adventure and hired Ketchum, Inc., a professional fundraising company headquartered in Pittsburgh, but with offices in Charlotte, to help for a flat fee of $6,850.

Members of the Finance Committee remember the first meeting with the Ketchum representative, Marshall Thompson. He asked each committee member to write down what he was willing to pledge, since the

Wedding of Martha Barnett and Giles Beal Jr., June 26, 1952, Marietta Street.

committee would be setting the pace. Each complied without including names and handed the cards to him. Thompson slowly rifled through the cards and then stunned the committee members as he tore them into little pieces and said, "If that's the best you can do, we might as well forget this whole thing." He asked them to fill out the cards again and tore them up again. On the third try, he nodded with satisfaction and put the cards in his pocket. The campaign had begun.

After four months, ending on December 22, 1957, the Adventure in Faith Building Campaign had raised $820,000. It was indeed sacrificial

Wedding of Sarah Adams and William B. Abernethy Jr., June 29, 1957, Marietta Street.

giving. There was some talk of reducing the size of the new complex to save money. Some members sold second homes and other investments to raise their pledge for the new building. More than $300,000 in loans had been arranged with Gastonia financial institutions, but only $50,000 was actually borrowed, and it was soon repaid.

One contribution came from an unlikely source. Marshall Rauch, a prominent businessman and political leader in Gastonia—and a member of Temple Emmanuel—later said that he had decided to give to the construction of the new church in honor of Lewis "Brud" Gamp, a Queens,

Girl Scout cookie sale, 1957. Left to right: Louise Love, Mayor Leon Schneider, Vanna Woods.

New York, architect and coach who had been a strong influence when he was growing up in Woodmere, New York. Mr. Rauch accompanied Gamp on a visit through the new church while it was under construction. Rauch said later, "I made a rather large contribution in his honor not only because he was a Presbyterian, but also because the Presbyterian Church has been a good influence on the community."

When the time finally came to choose the design for the church building, the members of the Building Committee found themselves in a dilemma. They wanted a beautiful structure, but not a carbon copy of what they were leaving in the old building. Building Committee member W. D. Lawson III put it this way: "We wanted a church that made people say, 'My, isn't that a beautiful church?' We didn't want them to drive by and not even notice the church, and we didn't want them to say, 'Would you look at that monstrosity that the Presbyterians have built?'" (Lawson,

who was thirty-two years old then, is the only member of the Building Committee living today.)

The committee members looked at many designs in person or in photographs. "About all we could visualize were the colonial churches," Lawson said. "So Wagoner would come down from Philadelphia and bring different designs, and we would say, 'That's too modern.' He would say, 'Well, what do you want?' And we never could come to any agreement about what we wanted."

On a business trip to Lincoln County, Lawson noticed a church of a striking design in the town of Newton-Conover. At the next meeting, one with Wagoner present, Lawson told the other committee members about it. Wagoner and all the committee members immediately drove up to see it. "It had a roof that swooped up to the back called a hyperbolic parabolic," Lawson said. "There was a person cleaning gutters; turned out he was the minister. It was a Lutheran church. So we went inside, and I said, 'Well, this is worshipful in here, even if on the outside it's strange looking.'"

Extensive meetings between the architect and the Building Committee followed for fourteen months. Finally by October 1958, the committee had decided upon the modern approach, but only after much discussion and trepidation. Originally, the committee members thought they would want a Gothic design, but rejected the idea after being told Gothic would cost 25 to 30 percent more than Colonial or Early American. The indecision was still evident on July 31, 1958, in a letter from Wagoner to Falls. "If the committee ultimately decided that 'Colonial' is the best answer, you may rest assured that we will devote ourselves to the task at hand with the utmost diligence."

Dr. Moffett himself visited Wagoner in his Philadelphia office to take what he hoped was a final look at the design. Wagoner wrote to him on October 6, saying, "I hope that we are now coming down the 'home stretch.' But Falls replied in a letter the next day that the committee had met with Dr. Moffett after his visit and that the committee wanted Wagoner to fix a few minor parts of the design before taking it to the congregation for a vote. He enclosed a list of ten items and said, "Until we re-

*The Committees for the Building Program of First Presbyterian Church, Garrison Boulevard*

STEERING COMMITTEE

D. R. LaFar Jr., chairman
M. R. Adams
John M. Akers
L. G. Alexander
Ralph A. Dickson
W. B. Garrison
Fred A. Ratchford
F. L. Smyre Jr., chairman, Board of Deacons, ex officio

FINANCE COMMITTEE

W. B. Garrison and Fred L. Smyre Jr., cochairmen
John M. Akers
Joe L. Barnett
Dan S. LaFar
Charles I. Loftin
Craig Watson

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Ralph Falls, chairman
M. R. Adams
L. G. Alexander
Ralph Dickson
W. D. Lawson III
Mrs. J. H. Matthews
Mrs. J. N. Summerell

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

Ralph S. Robinson, chairman
Caldwell Ragan
C. K. Torrence Sr.

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Brice T. Dickson, chairman
Harry S. Cobb
Mrs. John C. Mason Jr.
L. Jerry Shive
Mrs. Fred L. Smyre Sr.

ceive material from you on these items, the committee's work is more or less at a standstill."

By October 27, 1958, all the details had been worked out and the committee was ready to seek congregational approval. Wagoner cautioned in a letter to the committee, "The idea of now going before the congregation

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Ralph A. Dickson, chairman
Mrs. J. N. Summerell, vice chairman
Harry Cobb
Paul P. Kincaid
Dr. W. M. Patrick
Mrs. Walter Rhyne
Mrs. Ralph Robinson

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

W. D. Lawson III, chairman
M. R. Adams
Bynum Carter
Mrs. James Ormand
Fred Waters
Mrs. W. L. Wetzell Jr.
Mrs. T. L. Wilson

FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE COMMITTEE

W. R. Sparrow, chairman
Leon G. Alexander
Mrs. Margaret Beam
James E. Cashatt
Harry Mann
Mrs. J. H. Matthews
Mrs. Hugh Query

DECORATIONS COMMITTEE

Mrs. Ralph S. Robinson, chairman
Mrs. Margaret Beam
Mrs. W. L. Wetzell Jr.

LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE

A. Gilbert Bell, chairman
Mrs. W. B. Garrison
Mrs. Paul Kincaid

for a simple yes or no concerning the general architecture seems good to me. I do suggest, however, that before doing so you invite as many church leaders and church groups as possible to view the work prior to the congregational meeting."

The committee followed his advice. Wagoner came down to partici-

pate in the gatherings. Dr. Moffett thanked him for his presence in a February 3, 1959, letter and informed him: "The congregation meets next Sunday and I am hopeful that everything will go well. I have understood that opposition is being organized, but I have not been able to detect any very effective movement as yet." Dr. Moffett's intuition proved accurate. On February 9, 1959, the congregation voted by secret ballot 325 to 115 to accept the design.

"I feel that Sunday was really a turning point in the life of this congregation," Dr. Moffett wrote to Wagoner, "and we are eager to capitalize on this feeling of harmony and unity by moving ahead as rapidly as we can."

Wagoner proceeded with drawing the plans in accordance with the wishes of the Building Committee and noted in an October 19, 1959, letter to Chairman Falls, "This may not be the best church which we have ever designed, but at the moment, I think that it is."

Within a few months, R. H. Pinnix, a Methodist who lived two doors down from D. R. LaFar, was selected as the general contractor, the City of Gastonia annexed the property, and the ground breaking was scheduled for April 10, 1960. When the church was finished, Pinnix gave a silver communion service to celebrate the occasion. His granddaughter, Sandra Garrison Hodges, her husband, and their triplets are present members.

Meanwhile, as construction proceeded, a myriad of problems surfaced, not the least of which was that Wagoner reported that he had been given an inaccurate survey of the property. "I believe Mr. Pinnix shares my opinion that the surveyor should not have shown grades that he did not survey," Wagoner said in an April 28, 1960 letter to Falls. "This is the first time in 35 years that we have ever had an erroneous survey of this character. . . . If we had known the facts, we would not have designed this shape building. I think we can work our way out of this, but it could have been quite disastrous."

Dr. Moffett was intent on not only building a new church, but more importantly considering an edifice that stirred the spirit of the church in its congregation. He personally charged each committee with the challenge, and he led the meetings with devotions. As a result, the architec-

Construction of steeple and cross, 1962.

Refurbishing of carillon bells, summer 2002.

ture of the church reflects the history of the Christian church and its tenets of faith. Dr. Moffett was a scholar of not only the Bible, but also many other disciplines. He brought all of his talents—intellectual and emotional—to the building of First Presbyterian's new home on Garrison Boulevard.

The various building committees labored long and seriously on each decision affecting construction and worship. For instance, all doors are wheelchair-accessible, and most are on one level to facilitate easy pedestrian and handicapped entrance and egress.

When Dr. Moffett began participating in the design process for the new sanctuary, he said he wanted it to have a central pulpit. Another detail was how to place the cross in the sanctuary, since Dr. Moffett had asked for a design that would allow "preaching under the shadow of the cross." The question was whether to suspend the cross or attach it to the rear chancel wall. The Building Committee initially preferred attaching it to the wall, but Wagoner recommended suspending it, so it became part of the motif with the pulpit, rather than a separate concept that would draw attention to it. Lighting on the cross designed to throw two shadows, representing the two thieves who were crucified with Christ, added to the powerful motif. The result was a magnificent surprise for the congregation.

The church files contain a letter dated September 5, 1961, from Wagoner to the artist LeRoy Setziel of Portland, Oregon, authorizing him to proceed with creating the cross. At eleven feet tall and nine feet wide, the cross was to be made of oak and hewn walnut, since Dr. Moffett had specified that he wanted to preach under a hewn cross, not a shiny one. Although the cross appears curved when viewed from the front, it is perfectly straight when seen from underneath.

In all, the new church facility contains seven crosses: inside the sanctuary, inside the chapel, outside between the chapel and the fellowship hall, two on the entrance to the sanctuary, one on the rear of the sanctuary, and, of course, one on the steeple.

But in Wagoner's opinion the incorrect survey and the position of the major cross in the sanctuary were minor problems compared to the sug-

Raising the steeple of our new church, August 16, 1961. Left to right: Dan S. LaFar, D. R. LaFar, Dr. Harry Moffett, R. A. Dickson, W. B. Garrison, Margaret Moffett, C. I. Loftin, R. L. Leviner, W. D. Lawson III, Eubank Taylor, Mrs. Woody Morris, R. H. Pinnix, and Mrs. M. R. Adams.

gested placement and design of the organ, which he called "uninspiring." Wagoner proposed placing the organ in the transepts flanking the chancel, but the organ builder, Casavant Frères Limited of Quebec, argued for placement in the rear gallery. On January 25, 1961, Wagoner wrote to Falls that "all of us in our office are greatly disappointed with the design which Casavant has submitted." After failing to reach what he considered an acceptable compromise, an obviously exasperated Wagoner wrote Falls on April 11, 1961, "Perhaps we might compare the situation to a beautiful lady who weighs 300 pounds. No matter how skillful the dress designer, he cannot really disguise the excess avoirdupois (of course, he can always close his eyes and listen to her sing, if she has a good voice)."

Even as late as August 1961, the controversy was still alive. "We simply

do not understand why Casavant has had to take our organ out of production because of lack of information received from your firm," Building Committee member W. D. Lawson wrote to Wagoner on August 11. "Quite frankly, the committee feels that there has been a lack of cooperation between you and Casavant. We do not know what has brought this about as we have relied on you completely in all matters."

Wagoner replied on September 6, 1961.

> Your letter indicating a "lack of cooperation" on the part of our office was the "unkindest cut of all." I am quite sure that we are not as smart as we ought to be, but I can certainly assure you that we have made a sincere effort to be cooperative. . . . The basic problem of the design of the organ, when it is exposed, is one which I frankly did not realize in its fullest extent. Up until the time we designed your church, the "design" of the organ was not a problem. The exposed organs which we had heretofore done were not in very prominent positions and their actual conception, from an aesthetic standpoint, was not too important.

Slowly, all the problems were solved and construction proceeded toward completion by December 1961, but Wagoner informed the church on August 18, 1961, that the project cost was now more than $1 million and that his fee would be 7.2 percent of the total building cost. More changes and additions would push the final cost to $1.45 million and require a second phase of fund-raising, which included the funding of memorials in the form of dedication of parts of the church building and grounds. A list of these memorials is included in the Memorial Book in the Heritage Room. This book, given by Brice T. Dickson, contains endearing memorials written by family members to honor those loved ones they remembered with gifts to the new church. It is well worth the reader's time to spend an hour enjoying this large, red-leather volume.

According to the 1961 First Church history by Charles F. Daniel, "The church is designed and equipped to adequately care for a congregation of 2,000 or more and is erected to stand for centuries. It is a complete unit and is not designed for additions or expansions; the idea being when the facilities become cramped, the formation of new congregations will

be an imperative need." The sanctuary itself was built to accommodate 860—according to the fire code.

Spiritual influences were prominent in the new design. The scripture verse carved into the baptismal font is taken from II Corinthians 5:17: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." The verse carved in the lower lectern is from Psalm 119:165: "Great peace have they which love Thy law." On the pulpit, the carving is from John 8:12: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

As construction proceeded on the new facility, the last service was held in the old sanctuary on Marietta Street on October 8, 1961. In his final sermon there, Dr. Moffett said,

> The little congregation of 236 who came into these walls when they were new, God has blessed them, their faith, their vision, and their devotion. It has never been easy, has it, for those who are really concerned about the Kingdom of God? As the church in the community has grown, the need for a clearer and more courageous, and a firmer and more dedicated witness to the Lord Jesus Christ has increased. As a community of which we are a part continues to grow, the need for Christian sacrifice and dedication on the part of those of us whom God has so signally blessed will continue to increase. So let these stones remind us that we who have taken the name of God upon us, we who have fashioned for ourselves, with His help, another beautiful house made of stone in which to worship and serve Him, this promises us no ease. This calls us to dedication and to service. May God grant in that spirit that we leave this place and enter into another.

The first service on the new site was held on October 15, 1961, in the fellowship hall, since the new sanctuary was not complete. Funerals, weddings, and baptisms were held there while Dr. Moffett and First Church members eagerly awaited the completion of the new sanctuary. That day came on June 3, 1962, amid prayer and hymns. Wagoner spoke briefly, saying, "This church . . . sprung from a different approach to church architecture, prepared especially for you, and I hope that what we have done

Aerial view of our new church on Garrison Boulevard, 1962.

together will have a lasting influence on Presbyterianism." He told members of the Building Committee that the curving walls in the sanctuary were made from marble chips that originally were to be used in the Air Force Academy.

Dr. Richard Peek, then director of music and organist at Covenant

Presbyterian of Charlotte, gave the dedicatory organ recital on Sunday, October 7, 1962. The Casavant organ was given in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Monroe Smyre and Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Lewis Smyre Sr. by their children and grandchildren.

A five-hundred-pound cornerstone was laid in the new building in special services on June 10, 1962. It contained forty items detailing events of the church and the community dating from the current time of the placement back to 1895. Among the items were histories of the church, Gastonia, and Gaston County; the 1961–1962 Women of the Church Yearbook; maps of Gastonia, Gaston County, and North Carolina; and brochures and statistical data of the area from the Chamber of Commerce.

The 1895 cornerstone was moved from the downtown church, and the contents of its time capsule were noted and replaced in the capsule. It was placed under the new tower and actually forgotten until found by Tom Summer and construction workers in 2002 during renovation of the carillon.

Situated on a hill at the apex of Gastonia, 825 feet above sea level, the dramatic sanctuary, with its 165-foot spire, blended easily with the shape of the mountains to the west. Dr. Moffett had asked that the pastor's study be designed to allow him to look at the mountains for inspiration. Now the mountains are somewhat obscured by the growth of trees behind the church.

*Teach us again O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that godliness with contentment is great gain, that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.*

*May our thankfulness for your mercies find expression in service to others and in our dedication to you, our loving and living Lord. To your glory. Amen.*

*—From a morning prayer by the Reverend Dr. Donald Mitchell, interim pastor, 1995–1997*

*Chapter Six*

# A PEACE THAT PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth . . . the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore.*

—*Psalm 121:1, 2, 8*

Dr. Harry Moffett had no plan to visit the Belgian Congo in the spring of 1960, especially if he knew it would cause him to miss the official ground breaking of the new church building in Gastonia on April 10 of that year.

But he felt he just could not say no when the Board of World Missions of the entire Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) asked him to be an official representative on an important trip to the African country. Dr. Moffett was chosen to attend a March 28, 1960, meeting in the Congo to formally turn over PCUS property to the newly created Congolese Presbyterian Church. This meeting would take place just before the country attained its independence on June 30, 1960. Dr. Moffett was to accompany the Reverend Dr. C. Darby Fulton, the executive secretary of the PCUS Board of World Missions. Dr. Fulton had been to the Congo on several occasions and he knew the potential danger he and Dr. Moffett would be facing.

Just a few months earlier, the Reverend J. Kemp Hobson, a Presby-

terian missionary who had visited First Church in Gastonia in 1956, had been severely injured in the Congo when a rioter cut off his hands. He had been flown to the United States for reattachment surgery. Hobson had written to the First Church newsletter in Gastonia on December 20, 1959, "We thought Christian teaching was doing something to break down the division in tribes. . . . The recent agitation and trouble has of course done some harm, but it has done one thing for the Native Church that is constructive. It has convinced Native leaders and Native Christians that the missionaries cannot stay in this country forever, and that the Congo church must eventually stand on its own feet." Presbyterian missionaries had been in the country since 1890.

First Church of Gastonia had supported Hobson and other missionaries in the Congo and other places for years, including Brazil, where Dr. Henderlite's nephew, the Reverend Langdon Henderlite, was a missionary. In Japan, the church had given assistance to the Reverend and Mrs. J. A. McAlpine and in Korea to the Reverend and Mrs. George Brown and the Reverend and Mrs. C. G. Durham, and in Taiwan, the Reverend and Mrs. U. T. Tremble.

Dr. Moffett had been a member of the Board of World Missions since 1954 and had faithfully attended the board meetings in Nashville. So when the board met on March 16, 1960, it decided it would be "wise to have a representative to accompany Dr. Fulton for so important a consultation," and the board asked that Dr. Moffett "be urged to go if the way be clear." Dr. Fulton had received a letter from one of the missionaries in the Congo warning him that the situation was "dangerous." Nevertheless, Dr. Moffett agreed to accompany Dr. Fulton. He left on Monday, March 20, by train for New York City to meet Dr. Fulton. From there they flew to Manchester, England, then changed planes several times before arriving in Africa on Friday, March 24.

Dr. Moffett let his congregation know of details about his trip in the March 27, 1960, issue of the church newsletter. "Because of the suddenness of my appointment to go with Dr. Fulton to Africa, I have not been able to see many of you," he wrote. "However, I know that the Women of the Church are going to have prayer groups for our mission and a great many of you have expressed your interest and concern. I want to thank

Dr. Moffett and Dr. Fulton preparing to visit nine of the ten Congolese missions.

you very humbly for your prayers and support." He wrote that he would try to keep the congregation informed but he did not know how efficient the mail would be. "Although Dr. Fulton will bear the brunt of the responsibility, it is a great privilege for me to share this experience with him. I am very grateful to the Session and to the congregation for allowing me to go. You will be much in my thoughts and prayers and I know I will be in yours."

It turned out that Dr. Moffett was able to send only one letter back home. In it he reported that he and Dr. Fulton had spent three hours answering questions from the Congolese clerics on the operation of the church mission. "One of our missionaries, John Davis, has a Piper Cub

and starting Monday we are planning to visit every station (of ten), except one, of our Mission. We will travel by air and car and be on the go constantly for 8 days. There will be no time to write."

Dr. Moffett did more than travel and confer. He also delivered sermons in English at two mission outposts, Tshimbi and Ndesha. In his seventy-two-page journal of his trip into the Congo, Dr. Moffett admitted to himself that he was very nervous. "I must confess that I am laboring under a burden of anxiety at this point for I am to preach to a Congolese congregation thru an interpreter on Sunday," he wrote. "I greatly fear the loss of poise and clarity of thought and self confidence because of my extemporary style."

But after he had delivered the sermons, he wrote, "I have had a glorious and unforgettable spiritual experience! My first Sunday worship with a Congolese congregation lifted me up into God's presence in a wonderful and memorable way. The power of Christ to break thru the barriers of race, language, custom and the wide chasm of educational advantage and cultural privilege and make us one in worship and faith will never be forgotten."

In his journal, Dr. Moffett wrote about the beauty and vastness of Africa and about the poverty and ignorance he found in the Congo. But after he met with and came to know some of the Congolese Christians, he wrote that it was unspeakably and indescribably moving. "I shall never be the same again," he wrote. "I feel as though deep subterranean caverns of prejudice and fear that were established in my deep consciousness from my birth have been penetrated with the light of Christ and will never again be the dark breeding places of prejudice and latent hate or fear they once were. I do not believe I'll ever be slave of race prejudice again nor lose this freedom of the spirit that has possessed me—I pray God, I never lose it!"

Within a few days in the country, Dr. Moffett was beginning to see what its future would hold: "I cannot escape the pessimistic conclusion that chaos, and, probably, violence will spread throughout the Congo after independence, if not before, and that we should give serious thought to the safety of our missionaries and most especially the women and chil-

Dr. Moffett titled this photo from the Congo "Native Market."

dren." Dr. Moffett's observations proved correct. Violence continued to plague the Congo even into the early twenty-first century.

It was not all work and hardship for Dr. Moffett on the trip. His missionary hosts took him fishing for tiger fish, which he described as "a scaled fish of rich gold and black stripes with ferocious teeth." He caught one of about five pounds and had his photograph taken with it (see color insert). "It gave me the most terrific fight for its size of any fish I ever handled. This fish is also delicious to eat," he wrote.

Dr. Moffett described his main mission—that of helping Dr. Fulton negotiate handing over control to the Congolese—as being

> conducted with considerable confusion and disorder and consisted largely of interminable and repetitious "palaver." This is a great word

> in the Congo. "Palaver" is debate over a controversy or the solution of a problem. The word describes a very elemental Congolese trait. One never goes straight to a point. You approach it obliquely by a very involved and circuitous route, trying always to bait your opponent. When a decision is finally reached, if ever, then the Congolese say "We have cut the palaver." . . . It is a grave mistake to assume that because the Congolese is primitive, limited educationally and shabbily dressed living in a mud hut that he is stupid or slow. He is far from it. These people have inherited a wisdom and astuteness that is mysterious and utterly foreign to our ways but it is far from foolish or weak. It is sharp, clever, and very difficult to cope with.

Dr. Moffett devotes several pages of his journal to a history lesson of the Presbyterian missionary involvement in the Congo, beginning in 1891. Then he discusses the new arrangement that he and Dr. Fulton were finally able to negotiate with the Congolese. Finally, he ends his journal with a fascinating description of a trip with Dr. Fulton to visit the king of the Belugas tribe of about 100,000 at his palace, really a collection of thatched buildings, where he kept about three hundred wives. The Belugas were considered talented artists and excelled in weaving colorful thatch mats. "Before we left the King presented Darby a ceremonial knife and me an old and intricate mat," Dr. Moffett wrote.

Dr. Fulton wrote in his diary during the trip with Dr. Moffett, "Several missionaries expressed amazement that so many Africans could have reverted so quickly to completely heathen customs and practices which they had been thought to have outgrown and repudiated for good—tribal war, occult practices, witchcraft, arson, poisoned arrows, poison cup, etc. Even some Christians have returned to depravity. Most discouraging!" Dr. Fulton had also visited First Church in the past to spread the word about world missions.

Upon Dr. Moffett's return, he gave several lectures at the church and to various civic clubs about his adventure. He showed slides that he had taken of the natives and the countryside, but he never returned to the Congo. Within a few weeks, Dr. Moffett was soon back in the routine that he had grown to love. He changed the Wednesday night prayer ser-

vice to Wednesday prayer luncheons, which broadened the church's outreach program and opened the service to those outside First Church's membership, particularly to businessmen who could walk from the then thriving downtown area. He had found a good fit for himself with the church and the community.

Although Dr. Moffett's schedule allowed for very little leisure time, he joined the Gastonia Country Club and played golf. He enjoyed hunting and fishing trips with some of his church members. On one of the fishing trips to the Outer Banks, he was staying in a cabin belonging to Dr. Ben Dawsey and Wilson Setzer, who were both members of the First United Methodist Church of Gastonia. Dr. Moffett was being accompanied by Dr. Gene Woody, Dr. Don Lackey, and Dr. W. W (Dub) Dickson. Dickson had just been elected a deacon. Dr. Moffett said to Dickson with mock seriousness, "Let me refresh your memory about the duties of a deacon. It means to be a servant and I want my coffee brought to me at five A.M."

Gentlemen of the church, 1965. Left to right: John R. Falls (back), Trigger Workman, T. M. Mackorell, David Yarbrough, John Peden, B. E. Smith.

Dr. Moffett often showed his sense of humor. Once he borrowed church member Craig Watson's luxury Rolls Royce automobile to play a trick on his friend, the Reverend Dr. Warner Hall, who was senior minister of Covenant Presbyterian in Charlotte. Both had been to Scotland on visits. He called Hall to ask him to go to lunch and told him he would pick him up at noon in front of the Tate-Brown men's clothing store on busy Tryon Street in downtown Charlotte. Dr. Moffett had timed his arrival so the car would draw lots of attention from the lunchtime crowds. When Dr. Moffett drove up in the Rolls, Hall was astounded. "Where did you get this car?" he asked, and Dr. Moffett coolly replied, "My flock has been good to me lately. What has yours done for you?"

Hall returned the favor once, stopping by the First Church office in 1966 to report that the cross atop the steeple had been bent. It indeed had been damaged by wind or lightning. He jokingly asked Dr. Moffett if the damage had been done by a strong wind or by Dr. Moffett's preaching and if the cross was "hanging its head in shame or in loving supplication."

Dr. Moffett's congregation did give him several new cars over the years. It was the custom of the church not only to show appreciation but to assure that the minister had reliable transportation. For many years, W. B. Garrison solicited individuals for money to buy the cars. After so long a time, he turned this task over to George Henry and Duke Kimbrell. Henry said later that his big-

Cross on our steeple bent by 65-mph winds, February 1966.

gest problem was not in collecting the money, but having some members become upset because they were left out of the solicitation.

In earlier days, Elder Ralph Dickson Sr. collected money from the men of the church between Sunday school and church services. They typically stood and visited under the big oak trees on Marietta Street. Important news was usually accompanied with the words, "It came from 'under the oaks.'"

With the passing of the old church building, another Gastonia tradition also disappeared, the ritual of the main-line churches downtown timing the ringing of their bells on Sunday morning just before nine o'clock. A few minutes before the appointed hour, the bells would be rung first at one church, followed by the others. The First Church bell was moved to the new church location and today is the top bell of the carillon tolling the hours each day.

Dr. Moffett was known for his work in the Gastonia community with race relations and in the South. He was one of the few white Presbyterian ministers who had taken part in one of the first historic series of lectures for African-American pastors in May 1953 at Stillman College at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In the fall of 1963, Dr. Moffett was appointed by Mayor Dan Gunter as the single white minister on the Human Relations Committee in Gastonia. First Church lay leader Bynum Carter also served on the panel.

As in other cities and towns across the South, racial unrest was threatening to explode in Gastonia. The first sit-in had been held in Greensboro in 1960, and protest marches were being held in Charlotte, Durham, and Raleigh. In Gastonia, after Martin Luther King Jr.'s letter from the Birmingham jail was published in mid-April 1963, leaders of a group of about fifty in Gastonia announced their intention to march to city hall to demand desegregation of public facilities and the opening of job opportunities for black people in the city. In Gastonia, a few leading black ministers called off a planned demonstration but presented the city with a list of seven sectors deemed appropriate for prompt desegregation, including taking down "white only" signs at public places. It was at this time that

Dr. Moffett was named to the Human Relations Committee as it struggled with keeping the peace in the city. He distributed copies of King's Birmingham letter to all members of the Ministerial Association.

In an interview with the *Gastonia Gazette,* Dr. Moffett said, "The racial problem has given Gastonia a stern test. Gastonia received a blackeye during the infamous strike violence years ago (1929). I was living in Davidson as a student then but remember that the city got a reputation of being a rough place." The city now had the opportunity to work out its racial problems in a calm and peaceful atmosphere, he said. "We can restore our good name and this in turn would be a foundation for building up our city to its rightful place."

"I have faith in the church and when the chips are down and the crises seem insurmountable, the church has always come through," Dr. Moffett said. "It will come through again in the racial issue." Under Dr. Moffett and Bynum Carter's leadership, the Session at First Church had passed a resolution on September 9, 1963, to let it be known that the deacons would seat any person of any race in any pew for worship services. It was approved despite the objection of at least one member of Session.

Some of the black leaders considered Dr. Moffett "one of our best friends in the civil rights struggle," according to the book *Spindles and Spires.* The book, published in 1976, gave credit to Dr. Moffett for his leadership in civil rights in Gastonia during the tense time in 1963. One of the authors was Donald W. Shriver Jr. who had pastored the Linwood Presbyterian Church in Gastonia from 1956 to 1959. He had left to earn his Ph.D. at Harvard University, had taught religious studies for a few years, and then had become president of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. "We have observed . . . the leadership of certain white ministers and laity in helping to shape agendas for decision-making in the local white power structure," the authors of *Spindles and Spires* wrote, "and one example of such a leader was the pastor of the affluent First Presbyterian Church, Dr. Harry M. Moffett."

A Gastonia businessman who was chairman of the Human Relations Committee in 1963 said Dr. Moffett's leadership in integrating the YMCA, movie theaters, and restaurants showed the way to other members of the

committee to take the same role. "It took courage, and the Reverend Dr. Moffett led the way."

Shriver's book recounts that Dr. Moffett was asked by the Gaston County Democratic Party to deliver a eulogy for John F. Kennedy after Kennedy's assassination in November 1963. Dr. Moffett used the occasion to address the leadership of the community about, among several subjects, how Kennedy had fought for the

> historically discriminated-against minority. Held in subtle bondage to poverty, through limited educational and economic opportunity and discriminatory laws, their plight is supported by a vast complex of entrenched fears and privileges, of submerged guilt and open hate, of deep frustrations and accepted prejudices. Here, in this conflict, the fundamental principles of our constitutional democratic government are locked in a deadly struggle in which, not only our national respect for law, order and justice but our influence and leadership of the people and nations struggling for life and liberty in our world are in serious jeopardy.

The book said Dr. Moffett's address "was a singularly rare, intellectually complex, and politically sensitive view of the uses and abuses of disharmony in human social affairs."

Dr. Moffett had shown his leadership in race relations early on. In a January 17, 1960, sermon, he said, "We who live in the South live in a volatile situation out of which there must come some solution in the living together of the two races that make up this section of our country. What do we want? Just nothing to happen? We dare not face it. We just hope and pray that it will continue. We live in dread fear of rockets and hydrogen bombs and all the things that can happen . . . (There is an) awakening interest in religion but church is the most difficult place to change because we want it to be like it was when we were children. But it must change. It must bring a light into the world or face the darkness."

Dr. Moffett also was active in the Gastonia Rotary Club, and in addition to his membership on the Board of World Missions, he served on the board of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, where his friend

Dr. James A. Jones was president. As a trustee at Union, Dr. Moffett was leading one of the small discussion groups that trustees conducted with students. One of the students said, "Dr. Moffett, I have heard that the Presbyterian Church United States is controlled by a hierarchy of four or five ministers. Is this true?" Dr. Moffett replied, "Absolutely, and you are looking at one of them."

Although Dr. Moffett had told members of the pulpit committee that he would stay seven or eight years, leaders of the church had convinced him to stay at least until the new church was fully funded. That finally occurred in the spring of 1966, and the church was formally dedicated on June 19 of that year. Dr. Moffett marked the occasion with a sermon titled "A House Built with Hands." He recounted the history of the church and said, "The dedication of this inspiring building, free of debt within seven years' time, speaks for itself. Only the commitment, loyalty and unity of a great congregation supporting their chosen leaders could have brought about so outstanding an achievement so swiftly."

The hours required in the demanding job as senior minister eventually began to take their toll on Dr. Moffett. In March 1967, Fred Smyre Jr., still chairman of the Steering Committee, recommended that the Session grant Dr. Moffett an immediate ten-day leave of absence on advice of Dr. Moffett's physician. Smyre also moved that Dr. Moffett's vacation be extended from one month to seven weeks, including one week of study leave, and that once each month Dr. Moffett be encouraged and allowed to take three consecutive days off "completely away from his administrative and pastoral duties." The Session approved each recommendation unanimously. Despite the changes, Dr. Moffett continued a torrid pace, and finally he tendered his resignation to the congregation on July 30, 1967, to be effective on August 29. He became senior minister of Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas, although he would return at least once every year for several years to take Outer Banks fishing trips with his Gastonia buddies.

When Dr. Moffett died in February of 1983 at the age of seventy-two, the *Gastonia Gazette* remembered him in an editorial as having provided "inspired leadership . . . in troubled times." The editorial said, "Dr. Moffett not only was an able and effective preacher (seldom did he use

notes), but he had a fine tuning for the needs of other people. He served on the local human relations commission during some trying times and was instrumental in helping to bridge the gap of misunderstanding that appeared back then. . . . He served his church and his fellowman for 40 years, and he will be missed."

Dr. Moffett is remembered at First Church as an outstanding, dedicated Christian leader. He kept the lay leaders working and achieving the various tasks of building, financing, and moving this great church with very little deep unrest. As a member recalled, "Dr. Moffett could persuade you to do things you did not want to do and be happy about it when you finished."

*O God, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth.*

*Not because we are wise or good do we call upon you, but because we faintly understand how little we know, and because one thing we know far too well, that we are not pure enough to look upon you. Come to us in our great unworthiness. Amen.*

*—From a prayer of intercession by the Reverend Mr. Frank Mayes, associate pastor, 1980–1989*

*Chapter Seven*

# BROADENING THE VISION

*But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter and we are all the work of thy hand.*

*—Isaiah 64:8*

If Dan LaFar Jr. had not been persistent, the Reverend James Gordon Stuart may never have agreed to succeed Dr. Harry Moffett as senior minister at Gastonia's First Presbyterian Church. After Dr. Moffett left, LaFar was named to chair the new pulpit committee. In that capacity, he asked the Reverend Jim Fogartie, pastor of Myers Park Presbyterian in Charlotte, for the names of possible replacements. Fogartie recommended Stuart. By coincidence, LaFar had heard Dr. Stuart preach a few years earlier at Sardis Presbyterian in Charlotte, and he had been impressed. Members of the pulpit committee traveled to Sardis to hear Stuart preach several times and then invited him to deliver a sermon at First Church in Gastonia before asking him to take the senior minister's post. But Stuart turned down the offer, saying he had decided to stay at Sardis, where he had been since 1962.

The committee pursued other candidates, but LaFar and another search committee member, Landon Thompson, asked Fogartie for another suggestion. Fogartie said to ask Dr. Stuart again. This time Stuart accepted, and the congregation called him on November 10, 1968.

It proved to be a good fit. Dr. Stuart was to head First Church for nineteen years before retiring in February 1988. During his tenure, he led

the church to a new level of ministry. This ministry included the election of the first female elders and deacons, the inititation of the Covenant Village project, the creation of the Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET), the establishment of the columbarium, improvement of the youth programs, and the introduction of new member-assimilation classes. In fact, in 1979 he was able to use the establishment of Covenant Village as the basis for his Doctor of Ministry thesis at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

James Gordon Stuart was a Scot not only in name, but also in church polity. He was an admired preacher who spoke from the pulpit with authority and great Presbyterian style. Dr. Stuart was a self-described "team builder." He ran the church administratively with successful associate ministers serving with him. Ralph Bright, Frank Mayes, Pete Carruthers, and Stephen Caddell brought new and successful programs to the church

Communicants Class, April 11, 1968. First row: Cathy Owen, Terry Forrest, Joe Gettys, Wynn Gibbs, Skip Berryman, Glen Harris, Ralph Dickson III. Standing: Connie Dickson, Holly Williams, Ruth Reid, Dr. Ben Lacy, Rev. John Kimbirl, Nancy Zeigler, Bruce Wilkie, Nancy Talley, John Templeton, Richard Williams, Bill Love.

The Stuart family, 1978. Sitting: Tyler, Mary Beth, Jim. Standing: Jeb, Liz, Leslie.

such as Intentional Christian Experience (ICE), Professional Counseling Services, and additional Christian education programs. Dr. Stuart was also a gifted moderator of Session. Often the Session minutes reflect a difference between his vision and the elders' caution, but Dr. Stuart, with great aplomb, yielded to Session authority. That wisdom meant that decisions were borne by the Session and the moderator and consequently were trusted by the congregation. He knew that a team was a strong implement in church administration, and he was a master at building a fair and approved one. Dr. Stuart thought the more people served on committees and were involved in congregational life, the better for the church. It was his wish not to control the church, but to guide it.

Stuart had a warm approachability that blended him with the congregation and community rather than lifting him above it. He had an identity with his parishioners that presented him as compassionate and psychologically sensitive. This quality allowed him to be the inspiration and imagination behind Covenant Village.

At the time he decided to accept the call to First Church, Dr. Stuart was forty-four years old. He and his wife, Mary Beth, had four children—a son, James Gordon (Jeb) Jr., and daughters Kathryn Elizabeth, Leslie Anne, and Tyler Leigh. (Tyler Stuart Bullock, her husband, Dale, and their three children are First Church members today.)

Dr. Stuart said he turned down the initial offer from First Church because he felt he had more to do at Sardis, a growing suburban church in southeastern Charlotte. But when LaFar approached him a second time, he reconsidered the needs of the Gastonia church and saw a place for his style of ministry. He said the fact that First Church came back to him proved the pulpit committee members knew what they wanted. Stuart said, "It's just an exceptional church, and there may have been some Providence in all of this."

After visiting the first time in Gastonia, Stuart said he came away impressed with the church facilities, congregation, and leadership. The leaders knew how to manage, and they knew how to project and come up with the bottom line. Stuart knew about the bottom line, because before he became a minister, he had been an accountant. After receiving his bachelor's degree at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, he had worked with his brother three years and planned to join him in business as Stuart and Stuart, Certified Public Accountants. But his service in World War II caused him to change his mind. "I was a navigator in the war and I had seen death and destruction," Stuart said. "I saw a lot of things that really bothered me and I began to see man's inhumanity toward his fellow man." Stuart flew thirty missions on a B-17 bomber airplane with the Fifteenth Air Force, stationed in Italy.

After his discharge, Stuart returned to Mississippi but decided to make a career change. "Politically, I just didn't like what I saw in Mississippi and I wanted to see if I could help to heal humanity, so I went into the ministry." He entered Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, graduating in 1952. He then spent two years as assistant minister at Peachtree Road Presbyterian in Atlanta. In 1954 Stuart entered a graduate program at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, where part of his experience included pastoral counseling in a mental hospital. "I

learned much in the mental hospital in Newark, New Jersey, which augmented my theological studies," Stuart said.

> A lot of the times those people were there because they couldn't find any support or reinforcement or any love elsewhere. I remember that the psychiatrist I was working under said, "If you damned ministers ever had any love in your church, you would reach down and support people like this, and we wouldn't have to work with them." He said, "Love is the only thing you talk about in the church, but I don't see you operating consistently with it." I will never forget that.

Stuart left Princeton in 1955 to become pastor of the new St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, leaving three years later to return to Peachtree Presbyterian in Atlanta as associate minister. After four years he was called to Sardis as senior minister.

Stuart said he felt called to First Church of Gastonia because he believed he was needed to launch programs that would complement the beautiful, modern complex. "It was obvious Harry Moffett had done an excellent job leading the congregation through the construction of the church. The challenge that lay ahead was the development of programs to utilize the new facility. This project was energizing to me," he said. Stuart said he believed the church needed to develop a new mission statement to guide the programs in their new buildings, and the membership seemed inspired by the new project.

Along the way, Stuart said the church leadership instigated two services, one in the chapel in addition to the regular service in the sanctuary, to accommodate members who wanted flexible Sunday schedules. At first the early chapel service was only in summer, but after three years, it was extended for the entire year.

When Stuart accepted the call to Gastonia it was a time of upheaval in America. Riots had erupted in several cities after the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Protests over the war in Vietnam were spreading on college campuses. Gastonia was not the scene of any major eruptions, but the city could not escape the influence of the ma-

jor social changes. Fortunately, church and city leaders provided excellent leadership through these unsettling times.

In his 1979 doctoral thesis, Stuart described the sociological setting this way: "The general climate of the Church in the late 1960's, when the writer accepted his call to the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, was characterized by diversity, unrest, and struggle as to its understanding of mission." He said such factors as the campus unrest over the Vietnam War, the struggle as to the priority given to the church's involvement in social action, the rise of the youth culture, and busing as a means of integrating public schools were emotional issues being debated vigorously in the various courts of the Presbyterian church.

Stuart said he found the youth department in need of resuscitation when he took over in 1968, so he plunged right in—even playing volleyball with the teenagers. Then in 1970 the Reverend Ralph Bright was called as assistant minister, and he proved to be a popular youth leader until he left in 1974 to go to a church in Elizabethtown, North Carolina.

The new-member assimilation classes began in 1969 to help prospective congregants learn about the church's history, programs, and Presbyterian polity. Five consecutive sessions during Sunday school hours were devoted to this very informative program. The sessions were designed to help interested persons make informed decisions about membership in First Church. (One joins through profession of faith, transfer of church letter, or reaffirmation of faith.)

In August 1974, Stuart and the Session decided to have the congregation enter into a process called goal-setting. Stuart noted in his thesis, "The unique aspect of goal-setting is that it affords joint ownership in the building of the Mission and helps move people from individuality to corporateness." Facilitated by Clem Lambert, executive presbyter of Concord Presbytery, the congregation held several meetings to identify a set of joint goals. To help bridge the generation gap that usually exists in any church, Stuart called upon Rick Smyre to chair the goal-setting process. A young elder, he was the great-grandson of Alfred Monroe Smyre, one of the church's founders in 1882. "In 1974, we had the congregation come together with the deacons and elders in small groups," Smyre recalled. "We had two weekends. The first weekend we had about 150 people and the

Pete Carruthers and 1975 Communicants Class visit the Capitol and Representative James Broyhill.

second weekend we had 400 people. You could see the dynamics because word had gotten around that this was real."

Smyre said sixty-four different goals were identified, and he presented the results to the Session. "We had a variety and a range of different types of ideas that emerged from this dialogue," he said. Once the goals were identified, votes from each participant were tabulated and weighted for

priority. The congregation put increased emphasis on Christian education. The final report showed that the number one choice was "to examine the needs and interests of the congregation in regard to curriculum and to project courses pertinent to all age groups, such as Church doctrine, and more Bible study." Number two was to establish training to ensure properly qualified teachers. The third was to organize more meaningful groupings of adult and youth classes. Fourth was to study interest in added worship services, such as early Sunday informal family service. Other priorities included adding activities for the total congregation at family night suppers, initiating programs for single adults, improving communications, and so on. "The Session learned it had to listen to the congregation," Stuart said. "It changed the temperament of the church. We had established goals that the congregation wanted us to meet. It was exciting."

Stuart felt the congregation must have ownership in the program. He said then, "If the members do not feel ownership, it will not fly." He involved many volunteers and committee members. He knew the Session was the governing body in the church, and he wanted it to make the decisions, even when he did not always agree.

Although a feasibility study for building a church retirement home failed to make the top twenty goals, it attracted attention from Stuart and other leaders. "The needs of the aged were not found among the highest ranked goals," Stuart wrote in his thesis. "This was largely due to the numerically few elderly involved in the process." The original group studying the feasibility of Covenant Village consisted of Stuart, W. D. Lawson III, W. W. Dickson, Craig Fielding, and Charles Massey.

But the fact that the congregation had been able to come together to focus on various needs made a difference. "Covenant Village would not have been created without the goal-setting process," Stuart said. The process was slow going at first, Stuart wrote, primarily because the concept was considered impossible to achieve and "passed over as an expensive alternative to their [the elderly] present lifestyle or to a nursing home designed to be the last stop before the mortician."

"We didn't have any kind of retirement facility in this county," said W. D. Lawson III, the first president of Covenant Village.

The feasibility study was financed by a bequest R. E. Caldwell made to First Church in memory of his mother. The R. E. Caldwell Benevolent Fund was named to honor Mr. Caldwell because of his original gift. The residue helped establish the Benevolent Fund at Covenant Village after Covenant opened. Caldwell was a native Gastonian who worked most of his adult life as controller for LaFar Industries, Inc. He is remembered as a quiet, unassuming man, who was very exacting in his life. Caldwell never married, and upon his death in 1977, $85,000, a major portion of his estate, was left to the church. His instructions were that the Session use the funds to memorialize the name of his mother, Cordelia Morrow Caldwell. Today, visitors drive on Cordelia Caldwell Circle through the grounds of Covenant Village, and they may view a memorial plaque to her at the porte-cochere. After the Caldwell funds were secured for the research, two years went by before a search was begun in April 1979 for a professional consulting firm. David LaFar, president of the Covenant Village board of directors for ten years, was also a key person in the development of the Benevolent Fund, through his personal donations and the solicitation of gifts from others.

"The original concept was to be a Presbyterian Village sponsored by the church," Lawson said. "But we realized there was not enough capital potential in our church to do what we wanted to do, plus we felt we wanted it more community oriented. So with that, we approached eight other churches of different denominations, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, and so on. We had nine different churches involved." In addition to First Presbyterian of Gastonia, the churches were First Presbyterian of Belmont, First Presbyterian of Mount Holly, First Presbyterian of Kings Mountain, First Baptist of Gastonia, First United Methodist of Gastonia, Holy Trinity Lutheran of Gastonia, St. Mark's Episcopal of Gastonia, and First Presbyterian of Clover, South Carolina. The name was changed from Presbyterian Village to Covenant Village because of this widened involvement.

Lawson, one of the first people to get involved in the concept, said prospects did not appear favorable. "People felt it was going to be very difficult to raise two and a half million dollars to get it going," he said. "That was just going to cover the cost of the nursing care, but we were going to

Covenant Village groundbreaking, May 28, 1981. Dr. James Stuart with W. D. Lawson III.

Residents Lydia Ragan and Betty Kiser visit in the Covenant Village reception area.

sell the apartments—just apartments at that time, no cottages—plus [use] loans we had from the banks." He said seven banks in Gaston County agreed at that time to underwrite the loan. Banker Harold Sumner was not a member of First Presbyterian Church at the time. However, he was the banking representative who coordinated the loans for the project. He later joined First Presbyterian Church.

"I was the first president of Covenant Village and tried to get at least twelve people to be fundraising chairman but they wouldn't do it," Lawson said. "So I told Jim Stuart I would step down as president. 'You become president and I will become the fundraising chairman.'"

In June 1978, the project almost died, Stuart wrote in his thesis. A preliminary survey of support among seventy-seven church members and community leaders for a proposed campaign of $4 million showed disappointing results. But the committee changed courses after that and adopted a new financial approach, based upon one used by founders of a retirement village in Fayetteville, North Carolina. That approach started with potential residents of the retirement village paying a so-called founder's fee as they signed up. When about two-thirds of the rooms had been committed, the balance of funds would be borrowed from banks and construction would begin.

Lawson said the real key to the fundraising came when longtime church member Duke Kimbrell, the chief executive officer of Parkdale Mills, agreed to give $50,000 a year for five years. "That gave us incentive and motivation to go ahead and raise the funds," Lawson said. First Church member John Akers, chief executive officer of Akers Motor Lines, also gave generously of his time and money for the project.

After looking at several possible sites in the county, the committee settled on thirty-three acres on Robinwood Road owned by F. L. (Rick) Smyre III. The price was $90,000, and the committee members agreed to personally raise the purchase price, if it became necessary. "We wanted to be located geographically where it would be not too far from shopping, hospital, doctors, public places," Lawson said. "As it turned out, this location was much more esthetically desirable because of the rolling nature than if we had a plain flat piece of property on some commercial street."

Several problems about how to make the first payment of $12,000 on

the Smyre property by January 1979 arose before the fledging corporation became the surprise recipient of $30,000 from the estate of the late Freda Goforth Spencer. She was the widow of Gray Spencer and aunt of member Fay Spencer Bonsac, who died in July 2004, and great-aunt of Dr. Arthur Spencer III and Lee Bonsac Matheny.

The committee members visited several existing retirement places. "Our idea was if you ever moved into Covenant Village you would never have to leave," Lawson said. "We wanted people to be comfortable and never have to worry about being 'kicked out.' As a matter of fact, we have a fund that in the event someone's finances are depleted, the fund takes care of their monthly fee." Called the Benevolent Fund, it is administered by the Covenant Village Board of Directors. More than $800,000 has been bequeathed by estates, including those of First Church members Margaret Rankin Beam, Rebecca Stowe McLean, Emma Anderson, Elizabeth Matthews Welton, and Clara Baity Sparrow, who were Covenant Village residents.

Stuart wrote in his thesis that he thought the concept finally succeeded because, "They [older adults] realized that the church did care for them, not as a special mission, but because they were people. The writer does not believe that the retirement concept is designed as a replacement of the integration of older adults into family life. He does, however, note that the extended family is disintegrating rapidly, and he believes that the retirement home offers day-to-day contact with persons of one's own age."

Covenant Village finally opened in August 1982, eight years after the retirement village concept had surfaced from the goal-setting process. A plaque at the entrance of Covenant Village incorporates the initial reasoning for the project.

In the beginning entrance fees ranged from $21,500 for a single-room unit to $65,000 for a two-bedroom apartment. Cottages opened in 1989, with initial entrance fees of $92,000. By 2004, 270 people lived in the 140 apartments and 42 cottages. Marketing for Covenant Village was handled by a new company called Spectrum, under the leadership of David Ratchford.

Through it all, Dr. Stuart kept his sense of humor. Trip Stewart recalls the day she was dusting erasers at the curb in front of the church office

The gate beside the Covenant Village guardhouse notes its establishment in 1982.

when Stuart happened to drive up. "I'm glad to see at least one Presbyterian on her knees," Dr. Stuart quipped.

Another side benefit of the goal-setting process in 1974 was the upgrading of the youth programs at the church. "I spent a lot of time with the young people at first," Dr. Stuart recalled. "Then Pete Carruthers was called in September 1974 as associate minister for youth. He was right out of Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, with a Doctor of Ministry degree. He had a lot of ability. We really worked as a team and divided up the responsibilities. He was more of an associate than just a youth minister."

Associate Pastor Pete Carruthers visiting Brice T. Dickson in the hospital.

Carruthers developed a senior high program called Intentional Christian Experience, or ICE, which included mission trips to remote settings where the youth participated in repairing houses of impoverished families. Their first trip was to Kentucky, where they met Mrs. Patsy Bratton Turner, a home missionary in poor rural areas who was still active, although considerably slowed, at age 102. She had been guest speaker for the adult Sunday school classes at First Church in the 1940s. She spoke of raising money to build much-needed churches and said, "I never asked them for a penny, but I sure did evermore tell them what we were praying for."

Carruthers organized a youth car wash to help pay for the Kentucky trip and others. He also started Children's Church, which evolved into today's A Time for Young Disciples.

Three other areas flourished under Dr. Stuart's leadership: the Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET), and music and drama programs.

Longtime member John Akers first suggested what became PET in 1977

by collecting several available individual funds and establishing an endowment for the church. The son of a Presbyterian minister, Akers started his career as a teacher but became a trucking magnate, establishing Akers Motor Lines with his brothers. He was a talented businessman and a visionary, gifts he shared with his church.

PET received its initial gift in 1980 after the church was named in the will of A. B. O'Neal, a former member who had died in Pennsylvania. The church newsletter reported in its June 5, 1980, edition, "Mr. O'Neal [had] called to request the exact date of his baptism and church membership. After considerable research his name was located on the record books of 1916 (recorded 64 years ago in Dr. Henderlite's handwriting). Impressed

Pete Carruthers leads a children's service, 1977.

with the kind cooperation he received from Justus Cathey, and retaining a warm spot in his heart for the church, Mr. O'Neal made the church one of his beneficiaries." Justus Cathey was a beloved and efficient longtime church secretary always remembered for her love of the church and its people. She was never too busy to greet any who came in seeking answers or assistance.

Although it had been established in 1977, PET became very active for the first time in 1988 when Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Robinson Sr. moved to Covenant Village and gave their home on New Hope Road to the church. The house was sold at auction and the funds went to PET. John Akers was an original member of the PET Funding Committee when it was formed in 1988, along with committee chair Sally Robinson and members Bynum Carter, Tom Efird, Kerry Jarman, Gene Matthews, Pat Morrow, Martha Taylor, and Bob Wren. Other major contributions to PET over the next ten years were from the estates of Margaret Rankin Beam, Frank W. Davis, Wayne Howe, Carroll Harmon, and James Henry.

By the end of 2003, the Presbyterian Endowment Trust had distributed a total of $2,624,747. None of the PET funds can be used for annual operating expenses. Several funds come under the PET umbrella, including the Frank Davis Children's Fund; the Groves Fund, which is designated for Crisis Assistance Ministry; the Pearl Wilson Fund for Missions; and the Torrence Fund, which has paid for church projects such as the sanctuary sound system, the courtyard landscaping, handbells, liturgical paraments, and special benevolent causes. The Presbyterian Weekday School Endowment Fund is also administered by PET. It was established by Beverly Stowe from memorials for the Reverend Joe Stowe. The largest disbursement from the trust came in 2000, when it contributed $300,000 to the largely African-American congregation's Third Street Presbyterian Church Building Fund.

PET also contributed $50,000 toward the initial funding of Southminster Presbyterian Church, organized by the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. First Church helped survey potential members and provided office space for the minister, the Reverend Jerry Bron. It opened in 1994 with 203 charter members and their children. By 2004 it had 384 members. Several First Church members helped provide a nucleus of charter

The Presbyterian Trotters at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee.

members, including Blanche and Charles Wetzell, Susan and John Howren, Laura and Robbie Lineberger, Dwayne and Sarah Fink, Becky and Dave Maxon, Ann Neal, and Pat Sudderth.

Dr. Stuart also encouraged the church in other areas. First Church's drama offerings were unique in the city. "We started a drama department back in the 1970s," said former longtime member Charlie Wetzell, who was interviewed for this book before he died in 2003. "We thought it would be a good way to impart the Christian message."

Wetzell and the late Gunnar Nielsen were the initiators. The first drama was *Noah,* performed in 1971, in which the children dressed up as animals. "It was a little unusual in a Presbyterian church to have drama, instead of a Christmas pageant," Wetzell recalled. Nielsen directed *The Prophet and the Carpenter* in 1972, and it was reprised at Montreat. In 1973, the troupe at First Church produced *Adam and Eve.* The committee staged *The Sound of Music* in March 1985, attracting audiences of 1,100. Garland Atkins assisted Nielsen as musical director.

Other productions included a dinner theater in July 1985, *Amahl and*

*the Night Visitors* in January 1986, *A Nite of Comedy* in September 1986, and *Jesus of Nazareth* in January 1987. There were others, many directed by Nielsen.

There were some humorous moments during Dr. Stuart's ministry at First Church. Members recalled live nativity scenes, including one where the youth choir members were dressed as angels and looked down from the roof. At a later nativity scene when one Mary was substituted for another, a little boy, Jim Henry, blurted out, "You're going to have a baby, too?"

In addition to the efforts by PET, the church also provided rent-free office space from 1990 to 1998 for another organization, The Carrie E. and Lena V. Glenn Foundation, which had been established in 1971 by the two sisters who had joined First Church in 1906. The trustees of the foundation had been meeting at the church since 1974 and paid a member of the church staff to provide clerical support. The foundation started with $25,000, and at the death of the last surviving sister in 1986, $2.9 million was added. In 2004, the foundation had assets of about $7.6 million and had given away a total of $4.3 million in 524 grants with special emphasis on education, medical care, and religious and social concerns.

Dr. Stuart was at the helm in 1982 when First Church observed its centennial. A series of celebratory events were scheduled throughout the year. That October, a special hymn festival and services featured a homecoming for Dr. Irving M. Ellis and Dr. Harry Moffett and addresses by Dr. Ernest Campbell, Dr. William Oglesby Jr., and Dr. David H. Burr. Campbell was the former pastor of Riverside Church in New York City and a frequent speaker on national programs. Oglesby was an endowed professor at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, and Burr was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem.

Former First Church music director and organist John Hebblethwaite, who served here from 1969 to 1977, returned to introduce "God of All Time," a hymn he had written to commemorate the church's centennial.

The Women of the Church published a centennial cookbook, *One Hundred Years of Cooking,* compiling old and new recipes and featuring unique illustrations by artist Teresa Myers.

On the last Sunday of the centennial celebration, the 1962 cornerstone

was opened and additional memorabilia, describing the church's 1982 work and witness, was displayed in the Session room and inserted in the time capsule. Then the cornerstone was replaced for future generations to unearth.

Also in 1982, the church underwent another round of goal-setting, this time focusing on inner-church activity. Rick Smyre was called upon again to lead the effort. Coming out of this session, the main goals were a re-emphasis on the Bible and on religious instruction. Prayer groups were emphasized, and Stuff and Study, a Wednesday night educational and fellowship opportunity, was offered. Expanded adult education classes for Sunday morning church school were added. Worship flourished.

Dr. Stuart was still First Church's senior pastor in 1983 when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (PCUS) and the United Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA) met in joint session at Atlanta, Georgia. The commissioners voted to reunite the two bodies, which had been separated in the 1800s, and form the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA). Kitty Mackie was a commissioner elected by Presbytery to this General Assembly.

In 1985, a $1.4 million Heritage Fund campaign to refurbish, repair, and redecorate the church building, including new paint and carpet in the sanctuary, was completed. William H. Keith led the successful campaign with assistance from a professional fundraiser, Paul Kersher. Linda Dixon served as secretary and William C. Ratchford as treasurer. After the campaign was over, Dixon accepted the position of church secretary and served most capably for fourteen years.

Three members who became very involved during this era in First Presbyterian's growth and activities were Mr. Harry Cobb, Mr. C. E. "Doc" Center, and Mr. Henry Cabaniss. They were immense stewards of the church plant, personally repairing plumbing, renovating rooms, and engineering projects for drama and church-school needs. Henry's wife, Dorothy (also a faithful member), now resides at Covenant Village. Such men and personal involvement marked the administrations of our ministers.

Dr. Stuart announced his retirement in December 1987, to be effective February 1988, after nineteen years at First Church. During sabbaticals, the church provided the means for the Stuarts to travel to Scotland, Italy,

The 1984 Heritage Fund campaign. Left to right: James B. Call, Duke Kimbrell, William C. Ratchford, Mrs. H. S. Mackie, David Cline, Mrs. Fred S. Lytle, Douglas Crisp, Frank Matthews, Bynum Carter, Ralph Robinson Jr., Robert E. Sumner III, and general chairman William H. Keith at the pulpit.

the Middle East, and other parts of Europe, and on his retirement, the church honored him with a generous cash gift. Later the Session named him pastor emeritus after he and his wife retired to Blowing Rock.

*Make of your church both a redemptive proclamation of God's good news in Christ and a courageous champion of justice amid the unjust structures of our present world. Above all, give your church ears to hear and hearts to respond to "the still, sad music of humanity." Keep her aware of human hurt and despair and guide her to be faithful to her trust and to your missions. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*—From a prayer of the people, by the Reverend Dr. Douglas Aldrich, interim pastor of congregational care, 2002–2005*

*Chapter Eight*

# WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

*I have counsel and sound wisdom, I have insight, I have strength.*

*—Proverbs 8:14*

Women have always had a major impact on significant decisions at First Church. In 1884 the Ladies' Aid Society was formed with Sarah Lewis Smyre, wife of founding elder Alfred Monroe Smyre, as president. In 1887, the name was changed to the Ladies' Home and Foreign Mission Society. By that time it was under the leadership of Susan Rhyne Love, the wife of another founder, R. C. G. Love. The society assisted the Men's Missionary Society, which was organized in 1889 for the support of the Reverend T. R. Sampson, missionary to Greece. By 1905, the name of the women's organization had been changed to the Ladies Missionary Society with Lela Shuford Reid, the wife of a prominent physician, as president. In 1920, the society adopted the circle plan and became the Women's Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The name was changed to Women of the Church (WOC) in 1948 and to Presbyterian Women (PW) in 1983.

"The fact is that women were always every bit as influential in religious affairs and causes as the men, except perhaps in primary financial matters," said Robert Ragan, former longtime First Church member and Gaston County historian. "Their usefulness was mostly behind the scenes, but very effective, and their voices were heard individually and

collectively one way or another in higher council chambers. Their crusades, and there were many, were usually all-out, and the elders, deacons and ministers wisely listened and acted on their behalf."

During the first half-century in the church's history, the names of several women stand out among those blessed saints who were far ahead of their time and made a considerable difference in setting the tone for the religious affairs of the church and the advancement of the community. They were founders and exponents of the Gastonia Woman's Betterment Association, Woman's Auxiliary of the church, foreign mission work, outreach programs, the Sunday school department, Barium Springs Orphanage, Crossnore School, and the Kings Mountain Presbyterial. Under Dr. Henderlite and the Reverend Mr. Ellis, women began to become members and even chairpersons of important committees and heads of departments that previously had been the domain of the men.

Sue Gallant Robinson, wife of S. A. Robinson, was one of the early leaders. She joined the church in 1893 at the age of fifteen and served faithfully until her death in 1960. She was president of the Women of the Church, recording secretary of the North Carolina Synodical in 1918–1921, and president of the Kings Mountain Presbyterial in the 1940s. "Miss Sue," as she was known, was also active in the work at Montreat. Her summer home, Camp Gallant, was open to members of First Church for various conferences.

Over the years, the Women of the Church provided essential support for the minister, the Session, and the Diaconate by calling on all bereaved members, visitors, and new members. The annual reports provide not only copious detail of the activity of the various women's circles, but also a record of most of the major news of each year. Today Presbyterian Women continue congregational care by providing meals to bereaved families and prayer books to families with new babies.

The women also regularly honor their own through memorials and honorary life memberships. An example of the loving care in memorials can be seen in the WOC yearbook collection:

> On May 23, 1945, there passed from this earthly tabernacle the soul of Mrs. Hubert Ramseur, to enter into her heavenly tabernacle not

> made with hands. Her heart was full of loving kindness, and her hands of tender ministry. She was ever faithful in the performance of her duty to her friends, her family and her church. . . . She was loved, honored and esteemed by all who knew her. Like her Savior she was constantly going about doing good. Truly it can be said, "she fought a good fight, she kept the faith, she finished her course." And for her it laid up a crown of righteousness that the Righteous Judge will give her in that day.

The language in the certificates of Honorary Life Memberships was just as carefully chosen. One presented in May 1953 began,

> It is with appreciation and deep regard that this Life Membership is presented to Annie L. P. (Mrs. G. V.) Patterson who has served her Master well through many years in innumerable ways throughout our whole church. . . . She is now Pastor's Aide and brings to our pastor able and ready help in any phase of the work of the women of the church. She attended the first Leadership Training School held in Montreat 41 years ago and has not missed a Training School since that time.

The certificate then lists Mrs. Patterson's many posts held in the church, Presbyterial, and various Presbyterian charities. "She visits the sick, and those in trouble, prays with them and for them, always with the great desire of keeping alive the spiritual life of the church." (A list of all ladies who have received life memberships is in the appendix. Today Life Memberships are presented at the annual Presbyterian Women birthday celebration in May.)

First Church became involved in missions during the early ministry of the Reverend W. E. McIlwaine. The Ladies' Home and Foreign Missionary Society was organized on February 4, 1889. The funds collected were expended in the interest of home and foreign missions.

By 1891, the adult men and women were well organized for effective and progressive work, but no effort had been made to organize the children for their training in Christian study and activity. Very early in the Reverend C. W. Robinson's pastorate, a Children's Missionary Society

Our Bloodmobile ladies: Jo Garland, Mary Ann Patrick, Betty Love.

was organized with Miss Lizzie Adams as lady manager. From this society grew the three successful organizations of young people—the Band of Hope, the Willing Workers, and the Westminster League. This is believed to be the foundation for today's organization of elementary, mid-high, and senior high divisions of church school and youth fellowships. A plaque honoring Miss Lizzie Adams is in the Heritage Room.

The WOC also supported many important causes with particular emphasis on missions in Japan, Korea, Brazil, and the Congo. Major contributions were made in the 1950s to the Reverend and Mrs. George Thompson Brown. After the Reverend Ellis resigned in 1950, the Reverend Brown served as interim pastor in 1951 and 1952 for First Church, as well as Adams Memorial and Linwood Churches and Piedmont Chapel. (Brown later became head of the General Assembly Missions Board. The Browns' daughter, Mary Brown Bullock, has been president of Agnes Scott College since 1990.) Phil Dunford, a student at Columbia Seminary, assisted the Reverend Brown.

The women also collected special offerings to build furlough homes for missionaries in Richmond, Atlanta, Louisville, and Austin. A church

Dr. John Shaw, medical missionary, and Dr. George Miller in Korea, 1977.

in Japan was built with proceeds from the sale of beautiful Japanese paper napkins. First Church's beloved church secretary, Miss Bess Jackson, promoted the sales. The Reverend and Mrs. James McAlpine, missionaries in Japan, made regular shipments to the church and the lovely packaged napkins were sold quickly. They were frequently used by circle hostesses during refreshment time.

Also during the 1950s, First Church sponsored missionaries Dr. Langdon Henderlite in Brazil, the Reverend and Mrs. James McAlpine in Japan, the Reverend and Mrs. Vernon S. Anderson in Africa, and Miss Clara Fisch in Africa. Occasionally, some of the missionaries would visit First Church just as the Andersons did in August 1953, according to the WOC yearbook.

First Church member Helene Keyzer became acquainted with Clarence and Ruth Durham when she lived in the same town in Soon Chun, South Korea, during the 1970s. The church also sponsored orthopedic surgeon Dr. John Shaw and his wife Sharon, who worked with physically

handicapped children in Jeonju, Korea, during the 1970s. Shaw had been a resident at the Orthopedic Hospital in Gastonia under First Church member Dr. George Miller, who specialized in treating polio victims. Dr. and Mrs. Shaw joined First Church and even taught Sunday school. They became interested in serving as medical missionaries and were assigned to a crippled-children's hospital and orphanage in Jeonju. Dr. Miller and his wife Judy, an occupational therapist, corresponded with the Shaws, and when Dr. Miller scheduled a trip to a medical meeting in Hong Kong, they decided to pay a six-day visit to the Shaws in October and November 1977 at Jeonju, 120 miles south of Seoul.

"John was associated with the Jesus Hospital in Jeonju, a Presbyterian hospital, which our church helped to raise money to modernize back in the sixties," Judy Miller recalled. Sharon worked as an occupational therapist with the children. They had their two children, Laurie and Michael. "We were able to witness firsthand the work that John and Sharon were doing in the area and see the type of patients John treated. Many of them had the type of polio that had been seen in this country thirty years earlier. So George was able to bring new techniques to John."

Dr. Bob Blake, teacher, missionary, and old car enthusiast.

The Millers brought back a list of badly needed supplies that members of First Church sent to the Shaws for several years until medical missionaries were no longer needed in Korea. The Shaws now reside in Louisville, Kentucky.

The church also assisted other physicians and dentists from the congregation. Dr. Bob Blake, Dr. Ellis Fisher, and Dr. Bill Kelly went on medical missions, many to Haiti. First Church member Dr. Blake has made several trips to Haiti to establish and help operate Hôpital Lumière, the Hospital of Light, using medical equipment and supplies from the old Garrison General Hospital, which closed in 1976. First Church

Busy in the sewing room. Seated: Nancy Hunter, Bennie Peden, Burkie White, Louise Cathey. Standing: Becky McLean, Phyllis Tucker, Susie Mason, Fannie McLemore.

has contributed regularly to the missionary work at Hôpital Lumière. Foreign Mission work at First Presbyterian always was a strong response to the scripture "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel."

In 1957, the Women of the Church sponsored the Community Kindergarten to serve a portion of Gastonia's black community with Miss Myrtle Hoffman as the teacher.

In 1961, the members of Women of the Church cleaned furniture from the old church before it was moved to the new building. In 1969, Louise Drake organized a permanent sewing room, opened in the church to help with the Church World Service Clothing appeal. The room has been open every Wednesday since then, except in summer months, and the women meet to roll bandages, mend clothing, make gifts, and, at the same time, have a marvelous morning of fellowship. Thousands of receiving blankets with hand-crocheted edges and gowns with colored bindings have resulted, in addition to bandages and layettes.

Dr. Stuart was still at the helm at First Church when the church wel-

comed its first female elder in March 1969, although the constitution of the Presbyterian Church United States had been amended in 1964 to allow women to serve as elders and deacons. Margaret Vaughn Summerell had been president of the Women of the Church in 1954–1955 and had held virtually every other office of any importance in the sixteen years she had been a member. Her husband, J. N. Summerell, had helped organize the Presbyterian Church in Cramerton before moving to Gastonia in 1953. Mrs. Summerell was elected by the congregation on January 26, 1969, and took her place as an elder at her first Session meeting in March of that year to begin a six-year term. The slim, attractive, retired elementary school teacher was the only woman among the ten new elders and twelve new deacons. Later, Mrs. S. James Brown and Miss Jean Marie

Eunice Warren Bible Class, Christmas 1969.

Margaret Summerell, elected in 1969 as the first woman elder in our church.

Jean Marie Torrence, elected with Virginia Brown in 1972 as the first women deacons of the church.

Torrence were the first two women to be elected to the Board of Deacons in 1972.

Dr. Stuart encouraged the election of women to high posts. "It was a controversy, but when you have people like Jim Call at Firestone and Leon Alexander out at Wix and people like Ralph Robinson, Frank Matthews, Bynum Carter, and Duke Kimbrell, these are people who really are on the cutting edge," Stuart recalled. "They knew that women had a lot to offer. I remember the first [female] elder. She knew how to get things done and could stand up intellectually with the men."

Mrs. Summerell had been nominated by member Helen Marvin, who had been elected to the nominating committee for new elders and deacons by the congregation. Marvin later became elected to the North Carolina Senate. "I commented that I thought we ought to nominate more women and the committee agreed," Marvin recalled. "When I saw the list they had only one. The answer I got was that the women had said, 'Oh, no you don't want me. Are you sure you don't want my husband?' The majority of the women we had suggested refused to be involved."

In 1971, the WOC adopted a program of community and world service

Crisis Assistance Ministry.

that involved raising money to meet short-term emergency needs of people in the community and taking lunches to shut-ins. In 1972, the WOC members started participating in the Meals on Wheels program to provide hot meals to the elderly, with member Judy Miller leading the way.

In 1972, the WOC became involved in the Cooperative Christian Ministry, which was formed by Gastonia churches to meet emergency needs. The *Gastonia Gazette* acknowledged the church's participation in a story about the program. Initially volunteers worked out of First Presbyterian Church, handling cases referred to them by the Information and Referral Services of Gaston County, Inc. The name of the Cooperative Christian Ministry was changed in 1976 to Crisis Assistance Ministry for Christians and Jews of Greater Gastonia, Inc. In 1980, Marion Mayes, wife of associate minister the Reverend Frank Mayes, became its executive director. It is still very active today, supported by First Church, other area churches, and the local synagogue.

In 1982, as a part of the centennial celebration, the WOC published its first cookbook, *One Hundred Years of Cooking,* which included a brief summary of the church history. Mrs. Glen (Lila) King, president of the WOC, appointed a capable committee to publish the cookbook. It included favorite recipes of church members. Back then, meal gatherings were social occasions of the community as well as the congregation.

Presbyterian Weekday School teachers shared their children-tested recipes, including the one for Stone Soup, excerpted as follows:

> Stone Soup is more than a "recipe" for the pre-school child. It is an introduction to the importance of sharing. They realize that often in life we need each other, and they receive a warm feeling from this realization. You read the book *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown to them first and discuss it. They also love to act it out and then you ask the question, "Would you like to make Stone Soup in our room?"

They will always eagerly answer, "Yes!" As each child tells you what they would like to bring to add to the soup, you feel such a glow of sharing and working together. The next day when you prepare the soup it is a real joy to watch eighteen busy little four year olds scraping carrots, cutting potatoes and onions with dull table knives, browning the hamburger, under the watchful eye of their teacher, finally putting the top on and waiting for it to cook. When it is time to dine, I have never seen a child that did not eat their share with gusto.

The recipe: 3 stones, 1 pound ground beef, 1 large can V-8 juice, 6 carrots, 2 onions, 1/4 head cabbage, 2 stalks celery, salt and pepper, 1/2 cup water. Place the three clean stones in an electric frying pan. We usually have two frying pans going at the same time. Brown the beef, add the V-8 juice, add the vegetables that have been peeled and cut in small pieces by the children. Add salt and pepper and water and simmer covered for one hour. Remove the stones before serving. Children enjoy having saltine crackers with their wonderful Stone Soup.

*Submitted by Mrs. Philip R. Williams (Betty Ruth)*

In 1995, the WOC published another edition, called *Dinner Chimes.* It was a wonderful success. The committee included Rose Forrest, Meg Fisher, Emalee DeBevoise, and Barbara Jones. Talented life member of the church Mrs. W. R. Kelly Jr. (Annabelle) drew the sketches for the charming publication. Mrs. Tom Efird (Anne) served as president of the WOC. Mrs. Gunnar Nielsen (Lisbet) kept the inventory of the cookbooks, and Mrs. Alec Hall (Ginny) was the marketing chair.

The second and third female elders in First Church were Macie Ormand and Kitty Mackie, elected in 1971 to serve six-year terms on the Session. Ormand had joined the church in 1934 and started playing the piano for various functions two years later. She was a member of the chancel choir for more than forty years. "Everything I have done in this church I have enjoyed," she said in late 2003, at the age of ninety-two. Ormond now lives at Covenant Village.

Katherine (Kitty) McChesney had come to Gastonia as director of re-

The Women of the Church has always been the extended hand of hospitality to the congregation. This is true at times of celebration. Traditionally, Women of the Church welcome new staff and ministers with encouragement and usually meals. Below is a recipe used on several occasions to fete new members and those serving as interim pastors.

### CRAB SHRIMP CASSEROLE

*Served to welcome minister's family at Sunday lunch given by WOC.*

1 cup chopped celery
1 green pepper, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
6 tablespoons butter (divided)
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
1 can cream-of-mushroom soup
1 cup grated sharp cheese
Salt and pepper to taste
Dash of Worcestershire sauce
½ pound boiled fresh shrimp
1 (8-ounce) package frozen white crab, thawed and rinsed
1 cup cooked wild rice
1 cup cooked white rice

Sauté celery, onion, and pepper in 4 tablespoons of the butter. In saucepan melt rest of butter; add flour gradually and stir until smooth, adding milk a little at a time, and heat until thickened. Stir constantly. Add soup, cheese, salt, pepper, and Worcestershire sauce. Mix with sautéed vegetables. Combine this mixture with crab, shrimp, and rice. Pour into greased round 2-quart casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

*Submitted by Mary Ann Aycock*

ligious education (DRE) under the Reverend Ellis. "We welcome to our church and community Miss Katherine McChesney, who has come to be our DRE," the November 1, 1941, edition of the church newsletter announced. Obviously she went to work efficiently and immediately, producing a Christmas program in six weeks. The December 20, 1942, newsletter read, "Our Christmas pageant, written and directed by our DRE, will be given tonight at our regular service hour."

After her marriage to H. S. Mackie in 1944, Kitty continued as DRE until 1945, when she was succeeded by Mary Olive Walker. Kitty remained active in the Women of the Church and was awarded a life membership. Her husband died in 1970. In 1975, Dr. Stuart asked her to volunteer as manpower secretary, a position Lisbet Nielsen had held the previous five years. Mackie served the church in this capacity until 1987. She represented her church when Presbytery elected her a commissioner to the

The Seekers Bible Class, established in 1992.

General Assembly in 1973 and in 1983. Kitty Mackie served as chairman of Presbytery's Coordinating Council and vice chairman of Synod's Council. She made history when she was elected the first female moderator of the Presbytery of Concord in 1975. She resides at Covenant Village, is active in Presbyterian Church affairs, and remains a wise and guiding counsel. Her son, Spurgeon Mackie, his wife Margaret, and their three daughters are members of First Church.

Elders Sarah Abernethy and Helen Harris have also been elected commissioners to General Assembly, in 1999 and 2003, respectively. As commissioner, Harris attends all Presbytery meetings for one year with voice and vote. She is also a member of the Presbytery Committee on Ministry, in addition to being enabler/coordinator for Presbyterian Women.

*Please continue to guide and direct our efforts as we near the end of our mission, that we might bring to our congregation a church history that will unite us, and move us forward in spreading Thy love and glory.*

*In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

*—Prayer of the Committee of History and Archives, January 2005*

*Chapter Nine*

# A GOOD SHEPHERD

## 1990–1996

*Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.*

*—Matthew 25:34–36*

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*—Psalm 23:1*

The Lord works in mysterious ways. Just ask John DeBevoise why he decided to accept the call in March 1990 as First Church's senior minister after having previously turned down the offer.

"I told them no and told them definitely no because I really liked where I was," DeBevoise recalled years later. "Then I began to question if I had been open to a new place. I hoped I had done the right thing. But just as I was praying to the Lord, 'Thy will be done,' the car radio was on and the newscaster said, 'And now a word from Gastonia, North Carolina.' I pulled off the road. The news story was that Hurricane Hugo had come through Gastonia months earlier and that birth rates were up phenomenally there." DeBevoise said he took the report as a providential sign: "I

Dr. John T. DeBevoise, pastor, 1990–1995.

think the Lord was trying to nudge my heart and mind toward hearing what those folks were trying to say."

The seven-member pulpit committee breathed a giant sigh of relief after having looked more than two years for a successor to Jim Stuart. "We searched high, long, and wide," recalled committee member Dan LaFar Jr. "We covered the whole eastern seaboard. We thought we had made a real strong connection with a fellow in Pittsburgh, and we had him down here. We made two trips up there to see him. We went to Shreveport, Louisiana, to Columbia, South Carolina." Other committee members were Bonnie Blair, Elizabeth Current, Dub Dickson, Gary Fulton, Bill Keith, and Ralph Robinson Jr., the chair. The committee members said they read 250 résumés, visited ten churches, and met with ministers in seven states.

Dr. John Leith, professor at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, strongly recommended that the search committee consider John DeBevoise. After DeBevoise turned down the first offer, the committee was advised not to contact him again, LaFar said. However, a committee member insisted they try. This time they were successful in recruiting the tall, young, commanding DeBevoise, described by some of the committee members as the most touchingly genuine man they ever met.

While the committee searched, the church operated under the guidance of interim ministers Lawrence Stell, Zack Piephoff, Hugh Eichelberger, and George Gunn. A committee chaired by Bill Lawson and consisting of Sarah Abernethy, David Cline, Duke Kimbrell, Joan Barringer, and Cookie Brenner guided the administration through the interim. In the meantime, the new $48,880 columbarium was dedicated in January 1989. The Reverend Mr. Frank Mayes, associate pastor, who had served as advisor to the committee, led the dedication service.

Jean Kelly Adams was chair of the committee overseeing the columbarium project and was among the first to be interred there. Other committee members were Ben Ferguson, Frank Mayes, Don Carmichael, Margaret Upchurch, Baird Butler, Charlton Torrence, Becky Carter, Ruby Lee Roberts, Scotty King, Sylvia Leeper, and Wilson Dunn.

Even while the business of the church went on, everyone knew that the naming of an outstanding permanent senior minister was imperative to the future health of the church. "I don't think a church can go on very long without a strong senior minister," LaFar said, echoing the opinion of many First Church lay leaders. "It needs the spiritual leadership.

Reverend Frank Mayes, associate pastor.

It needs somebody preaching from the pulpit every Sunday morning for forty-five out of fifty-two Sunday mornings who can deliver a message."

DeBevoise had been associate pastor of Palma Ceia Presbyterian in Tampa, Florida, for nearly four years when the search committee visited there. "We heard him preach and literally fell head over heels," LaFar said. DeBevoise was another perfect fit for First Church in Gastonia. He soon made his mark on the church and the Gaston County community, establishing a new level of social consciousness. "He was truly a man of God," LaFar said. "I have never known anybody closer to Jesus Christ." Many shared that sentiment.

A native of Tampa, DeBevoise had grown up in Orlando, where his father was a Presbyterian minister. He received his bachelor's degree in philosophy at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. Then he went to Union Theological Seminary in Richmond for his Doctor of Ministry degree, spending another year to obtain a master of theology degree. After being ordained, he served churches in Roanoke, Virginia; Winter Park, Florida; and two in Orlando before accepting the call to Palma Ceia.

He and his wife Emalee, whom he had met at Eckerd College, had a daughter, Beth, and a son, Joe. Another daughter, Mary Emalee, was born while the DeBevoises were in Gastonia.

"It is with great thanksgiving that I accept the call of the First Presbyterian Church in Gastonia to the Senior Pastor's position," DeBevoise wrote in the March 15, 1990, First Church of Gastonia newsletter. "Emalee and I feel a deep sense of thanksgiving for the many elements which have made up our pilgrimage to your call." He included in the newsletter a statement of personal faith in which he noted that his faith had been shaped by "a long and significant family heritage; personal encounters with God's grace which I have known I did not deserve and which have come to me as a gift." He paid homage to congregations who had struggled with their faith and to "women and men of extraordinary devotion who, discerning the presence of God, offered their minds, hearts, and wills in gratitude, obedience, and care for others." He closed, "I believe that through our redemption in Christ, God has given our lives meaning, and the freedom to act with forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing."

DeBevoise remembered that one of the reasons he accepted the call

to Gastonia was that he was impressed with the quality of the members. "They had a proprietary sense about the church, and that's a good thing," he recalled. "Rather than a feeling like 'We go to a church where the preacher runs it or somebody else runs it,' they had a sense that they were responsible for the church, for caring for it, for managing it. For many of them, that had been a responsibility of their parents before them. They were intent on being the caretakers, stewards, witnesses for the life of that church."

Dr. John Leith preached the installation sermon for DeBevoise on May 20, 1990, saying, "John DeBevoise is a minister who makes teaching in a theological seminary eminently worthwhile." He said DeBevoise had been called to preach the gospel and to teach and to exercise pastoral care. "We install him as pastor in this church in a very bleak time in the history of the Presbyterian Church," Leith said. "In the last twenty-one or twenty-two years, we have succeeded in losing 1,300,000 members. We have over fourteen hundred fewer congregations than we had in 1966. We have less than 50 percent of the people in church school than we had in 1966. But never before in the history of the church have people been so open to the gospel as they are in the American society today."

Not long after his arrival in April 1990, DeBevoise immediately plunged his new church into a more active role in community involvement while maintaining the high level of internal spiritual and educational activity. He launched an intern program with young people from Davidson College.

In the fall of 1990, Jim McAlhaney became youth director. The Reverend Joe Stowe was appointed as parish associate to assist DeBevoise. A native of Gastonia, Stowe had been encouraged in his ministerial studies by the Henderlite Bible Class. He served various Presbyterian pulpits during a successful ministerial career. When First Church asked him to serve as part of an interim team after Dr. Stuart's resignation, Stowe accepted. He had a sincere and uncomplicated philosophy, and his home visits and approachable demeanor endeared him to the congregation. When John and Emalee DeBevoise accepted the call to First Church, Joe Stowe and his wife, Beverly, became surrogate parents to the relocated DeBevoise family. John DeBevoise's shepherding instincts were encouraged and tutored

Rev. Joe E. Stowe, parish associate.

by Joe Stowe. Stowe died unexpectedly in 1994 following complications of heart surgery.

With assistance and guidance from Rev. Stowe and others, DeBevoise quickly began making his mark at First Church. One of the changes was a prayer luncheon at First Church for prisoners from the Gaston County Correctional Facility who were receiving their GEDs (General Equivalency Diplomas) in a graduation ceremony. "Part of what the prisoners needed was an audience to see them get their degrees," DeBevoise said. "The penal system called and asked if we would host it once, which we did, and the people were so good about receiving the prisoners, sitting amongst them, talking with them about their families. It was really a remarkable expression of the hospitality of those folks who took part in that Wednesday lunch. Many of the prisoners said, 'This is the first time in my life that I have ever graduated from anything.'"

The luncheons often featured speakers such as North Carolina State Senator Helen Marvin and Gill McGregor, a television announcer for the Charlotte Hornets National Basketball Association team. Marvin defined freedom in her talk by saying, "When your freedom encroaches on my rights, it ceases to be your freedom."

Another major community effort undertaken by the church under DeBevoise's leadership was the Super Cupboard, a program of Crisis Assistance Ministry to bring sustenance and education to low-income single mothers. Penny Wilson was the director for the first year, and First Church member Becky Adams headed it for the next five years.

"They [indigent mothers] would come to the church one morning a week," DeBevoise said. "The church would provide day care while the moms were given basic life instruction, such as how to balance a check-

book, how to cook nutritious food, and how to fill out a job résumé. So the church put together a faculty of teachers: a representative from the bank to help them fill out a checkbook, a representative from the community college to help them prepare a résumé, a beautician who talked to them about hygiene. They would do this for six months, and it changed lives."

Dr. DeBevoise said the success rate was phenomenal. "Seventy-five percent of these women ended up getting jobs and, with the coaching of the faculty, got their kids in affordable day care. It turned their lives around." The church members went beyond teaching and coaching, he said, going so far as preparing lunch for them and even picking them up and driving them home. "A representative of the governor [Jim Martin] came and looked at that program one day," DeBevoise said. "He showed up as kind of a witness on his part as the sort of thing North Carolinians ought to be doing."

Becky Adams said, "I like to think we planted a lot of seeds. We equipped the women with valuable life tools to make lasting differences in their lives and the lives of their children." The program ended when changes were made in the federal social services guidelines.

The SOCKS (Serving Our Community with Kindness in Springwood) organization was begun in 1978 but struggled financially. First Presbyterian became involved in 1995–1996 through their Christian Action Committee, with Robert Barringer spearheading the efforts.

DeBevoise gave the following report to his congregation at an annual meeting on January 27, 1991: "There is always change at work in the church because God's spirit is at work in the church, but this year concluded an unusual three-year period of change in the life of this church, including the retirement of a senior pas-

Robert Barringer, very involved with SOCKS (Serving Our Community with Kindness in Springwood).

tor, the move of two associate ministers and one youth director, three interim senior ministers, one interim associate, the calling of a new senior pastor, a new parish associate, a new youth director, a committee to call a new associate, and a hurricane."

The church did not back away from controversy under DeBevoise's care. In October 1991, the Session voted to allow a workshop on abortion in the spring of 1992, saying the low-profile workshop would involve people from both sides of the issue.

In April 1992, DeBevoise reported that three members of the congregation had AIDS and that five had tested positive for HIV. He recommended, and the Session approved, that a subcommittee be established under the Pastoral Care Committee to support the families of the victims. In June 1992, DeBevoise invited his father, Dr. Don T. DeBevoise of Markham Woods Presbyterian Church in Lake Mary, Florida, to deliver the Father's Day sermon at First Church. It was a very moving service, with fatherhood as the theme.

In 1994, the church was one of four in the area to support a pastoral

Faith and Fiction book group. Left to right: Betsy Burleson, Kitty Peabody, Jean Hileman, Sarah Wentz.

counseling center in Gaston County. In 1995, it established a partnership with a church in Guatemala.

The church thrived under DeBevoise's pastoring. He started a book group called Faith and Fiction that continues today, led by the Reverend Patrick Perryman, associate pastor. By 1995, the budget had reached the $1 million mark for the first time, and Sunday school attendance was the highest in the church's history. During that same year, the Session voted to give DeBevoise $10,000 to be used during a sabbatical.

Dr. DeBevoise was an extremely well organized and outstanding moderator for the Session. He kept things in perspective and did not take it personally if one of his recommendations was not approved. He could accept defeat graciously and move on to what he needed to do next. He had a wonderful sense of humor, and if someone joked about one of his mistakes, he laughed longer and louder than anyone else. Members remember him as a giant spiritually, professionally, and even physically. He was articulate, witty, and erudite, and he demonstrated special sensitivity to the needs of his flock. All were equal in need in his eyes, and he developed his ministry around genuine love and service to his congregation. All thought DeBevoise extremely wise and mature for his age. He had an uncanny ability to recall names. "He could meet you one time and remember your name," several people said. "He returned early from vacations to handle funerals, weddings and baptisms. He was the epitome of the shepherd. No one ever went to surgery without his bringing communion if they wanted it."

DeBevoise was a true scholar and excellent Bible teacher. He conducted many Bible classes and for several years brought Dr. John Leith to the church for three days of special Bible study. Dr. Leith was the Pemberton Professor of Theology at Union Theological Seminary. The funds for the weekend events were provided by the Susie and George W. Ragan Spiritual Enrichment Fund. In addition to Dr. Leith, other leaders of these events have included Dr. Tom Long of Columbia Seminary; Dr. Mary Faith Carson, professor of Bible at Bethlehem College in Pennsylvania; and Dr. Bill Oglesby of Union Theological Seminary.

In February 1995, DeBevoise called for a $1 million benevolence campaign to be conducted internally among the members with no outside

consultant. He proposed to divide the $1 million, with $100,000 to go to the Heritage Fund; $500,000 to local benevolences ($200,000 to churches and $300,000 to other institutions); $100,000 to missions in the world ($50,000 to the Hospital of Light in Haiti and $50,000 to two projects of the World Mission Committee, perhaps in Central America and Pakistan); and $300,000 to other institutions. It would be called the Joy Campaign. After appointing a committee to evaluate the proposal, the Session declined to accept his recommendation. "It just wasn't the time to do it," recalled Bill Keith, a member of the committee.

There were other programs under DeBevoise's leadership, such as building houses for Habitat for Humanity, but not all the activity was outside the church. In late October 1991, church member Noel Johnson and DCE Allison Gordon Lineberger approached DeBevoise with the idea of a Kirkin' of the Tartans service. DeBevoise approved the idea and gave his reasons to the congregation in a November 7, 1991, issue of the church newsletter: "Someone asked me the other day, 'Why is a French Huguenot like DeBevoise interested in celebrating the Scottish roots of the Presbyterian Church with a Kirkin' of the Tartans service?' Well, that's a good question. Presbyterians have come from a variety of limbs on the family tree and our Christian heritage goes back to France, Ger-

Two greats: Mayor Jick Garland (eating) and Howard Whisnant, circa 2000.

Noel Johnson in the 2002 Kirkin' of the Tartans service.

many, Italy, Spain, and Israel! But, the branch of the Christian faith in the U.S.A. called Presbyterianism does have particularly strong connections with Scotland." He explained that he would give his full reasoning in his sermon during that first Kirkin' service at eleven o'clock on Sunday, November 10, 1991, whereas his associate Dr. Joe Stowe would be conducting a more traditional service at the nine o'clock chapel service. "So whether bagpipes strike your fancy or raise your dander, we are trying to offer something for everyone," DeBevoise wrote.

Since that first Kirkin' in 1991, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. George Henry Jr., First Presbyterian of Gastonia's service has grown into immense popularity, as evidenced by a crowded sanctuary each year. From the initial Sunday when members had to borrow tartans to wear and carry

The 2004 Kirkin' of the Tartans service. Left to right: Jay Garrett, Dr. John DeBevoise, Dr. Dan Wilson, Dr. David Stoker, Gloria Hickson.

in the sanctuary, they now proudly display fifty-five individual tartans. As a measure of respect, John Peden, as chief of his clan, has been seen placing his ceremonial sword diagonally across his body, the sign of peace in battle.

The ceremony itself is based on Scottish history and legend. In 1746, following the defeat of the Scots by the English at the Battle of Culloden, Scotland once again came under British rule. Scots were forbidden not only from carrying arms, but also from wearing kilts, plaid, or any other tartan garment. As the legend goes, the stubborn Scots secretly carried a piece of their clan's tartan with them to church (*kirk* is Scottish for "church"), and the minister then slipped a blessing (a Kirkin') into the service.

In 2002, as guest for the Kirkin' service, Dr. Jim Stuart, of Scottish heritage, delivered an inspiring and informative sermon about the history of the Presbyterian Church. In 2003, Dr. Billy Wireman, former president of Queens University in Charlotte, delivered the guest sermon at the Kirkin', attended by a capacity crowd.

Members of First Church received a shock when they opened their mail on July 24, 1995, to find a letter of resignation from their beloved senior minister, John DeBevoise. "It was totally unexpected," Dan LaFar Jr. recalled. "We thought he would be here forever." In his letter, DeBevoise tried to explain why he was leaving after five and a half years to return to the congregation in Tampa. "I have neither solicited nor sought this call from Palma Ceia," he wrote. "But now, God's providence working through this call has presented Emalee and me with the opportunity to serve the Lord by pastoring a church and being accessible to our extended family. As we have lived 10 of the 16 years of our marriage far away from family, this opportunity is a compelling one. Health patterns in my extended family make it clear to me that I may have the opportunity to be of some service to them."

DeBevoise said in his letter, "No congregation could have treated their pastor and his family any more kindly than you have treated us and our children. Together with you we have sought to serve the Lord in this church and I feel blessed to have been your pastor. The privilege of standing with you as pastor, with individuals and families in joy and sadness, in worship and fellowship, in mission and service, has strengthened my faith."

The *Gastonia Gazette* marked DeBevoise's departure with a story crediting him with organizing community Lenten services in six major Gastonia churches beginning in 1992 and a cross-denominational pulpit exchange in January. The *Gazette* quoted First Church member Bill Keith: "He has had not only a strong preaching ministry, but a very strong pastoring ministry." Keith had been a member of the pulpit committee that called DeBevoise.

*Gazette* columnist Bill Williams quoted First Church member Tom Efird as saying, "We were looking for a great preacher, but what we got was a great pastor also. He is one of those guys who is not only so good that he talks the talk but also walks the walk. He has done so much for the community. My wife Anne put it into perspective when she said, 'He is the most Christ-like man I have ever known.'"

In the August 3, 1995, church newsletter, DeBevoise said farewell and told the membership that an interim minister would be sought to take his

place while a search was being conducted for his permanent replacement. "I want to thank you for the notes, prayers, and support that have come forth as I have shared with you the news of my transition," he wrote. "Your Christian character continues to shine forth and once again my experience is that it is you who are pastoring me rather than the other way around." It was DeBevoise's last official word to the congregation, and August 27 of that year was his last day.

Within a month, Dr. Donald Mitchell, a veteran Presbyterian pastor, became interim while the search proceeded for a permanent senior minister. In the October 5, 1995, church newsletter, Mitchell, who had been on the job three days, introduced himself by saying, "In a congregation of over 1,500 members that supports multiple activities, that has over fifty separate committees and an extensive staff, the 'getting to know you' phase constitutes a genuine challenge." A native of New Zealand, he had been a missionary teacher in Peru before leaving to study at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he received his Doctor of Theology degree. He came to First Church of Gastonia after having been interim at Carmel Presbyterian in Charlotte, First Presbyterian of Kings Mountain, and Cook's Memorial Presbyterian in Charlotte. He had also been a professor and then dean at Montreat-Anderson College, vice president for academic affairs at Wheaton College, and for ten years president of King College in Bristol, Tennessee. Mitchell recalled that when he took the interim position at First Church, "One of my jobs was to counsel with staff and redefine job descriptions and see that the job descriptions were followed."

While he was serving as interim, Mitchell and his wife, Grace, enjoyed taking trips with the Presbyterian Trotters, a travel group that Jean Adams started in 1979. Annabelle and David Royster gave a bus, which was used on Trotters trips. Usually David Pegram or Dan McCurry, who had chauffeur's licenses, drove gratis. The group, which was led by Mrs. Adams and two of her neighbors, Presbyterian members Barbara Hunter and Sylvia Leeper, began by chartering buses for short day trips. The program grew to include longer stays in places such as Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia; San Francisco, California; and eventually Alaska, Canada, and Scotland.

Roadrunners go off to Flat Rock Playhouse, July 17, 2003.

Overall the church continued to operate smoothly, and the 1996 budget reached $1,025,000. The Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET), which had been created in 1977, received its largest contributions in 1997: $750,000 from the estate of Carroll Harmon and $100,000 from the Elisabeth Love More estate, bringing the total endowment to $1,622,177. The largest previous contribution had come in 1991 from Miss Pearl Wilson at Covenant Village, who designated $150,000 toward mission work at the church.

Also in 1996, the Stephen Ministry of First Presbyterian Church, designed to reach out to the congregation, was started under the leadership of Sarah Abernethy and Assistant Minister Ron Gilreath. Abernethy, her husband, Bo, and Gilreath attended a week-long training session for Stephen Ministers in 1996 at the University of Washington in Seattle. More than six hundred people from all over the United States and several foreign countries also were trained that week. This national congregational support program thrives in churches throughout the United States.

The chapel.

*Now Lord, be our Good Shepherd as well. Enable us to leave this place and to walk into your future. Write the good news of the gospel on our hearts with such strength that nothing can erase it. Help us to turn not only Thelma and those we love, but even ourselves into your everlasting arms. For we pray remembering your son, Jesus Christ.*

*—From a prayer of dedication by the Reverend Dr. John DeBevoise, senior pastor, 1990–1996, on the occasion of the memorial service for Mrs. Blake Breitenhirt (Thelma), January 2004*

*Chapter Ten*

# THE CHURCH TODAY

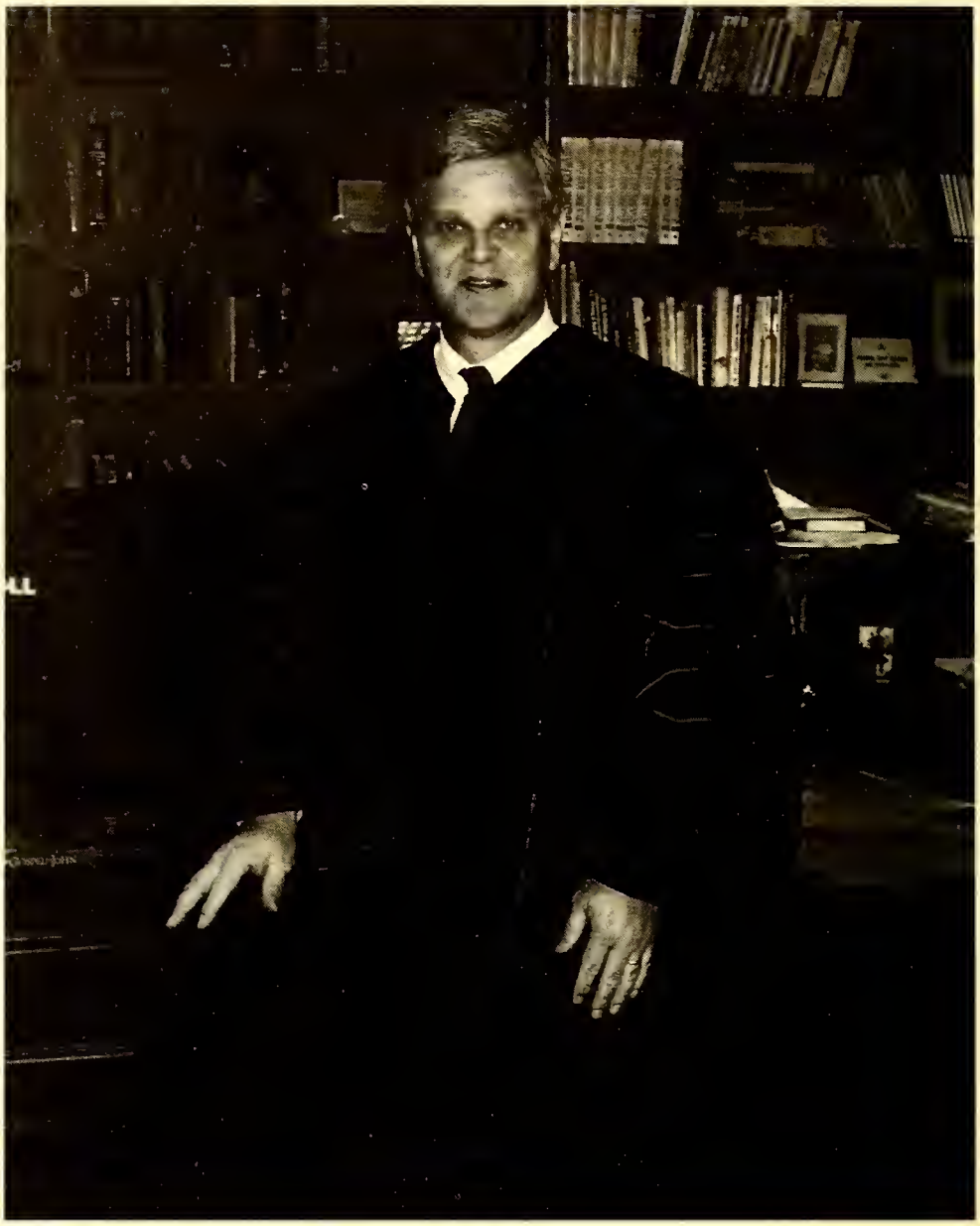
*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

—*Psalm 136:1*

After eighteen months of traveling and interviewing candidates, the pulpit nominating committee announced in December 1996 that it had decided to recommend Dr. David Stoker, who was senior minister at South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida, where he had served for eight years. Again, the process had been a result of persistence on the part of a search committee member. This time it was William Lewis Craig. Craig made regular stops at the South Jacksonville Church on the way to see his son, Brian, who was on the golf team at the University of Florida in Gainesville. After Craig's third visit, the Stokers made a formal trip to Gastonia.

"What struck me was David's evangelistic spirit and enthusiasm," recalled Mark Davis, who, in his mid-thirties, was the youngest member of the search committee. "I thought he would fit well with our congregation."

Born in Asheville on December 24, 1953, Stoker graduated from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and received his Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1980 and his Doctor of Ministry degree in 1991 from Fuller Theological Seminary, an interdenominational evangelical seminary in California. He served three years as an



Dr. David Stoker, pastor, 1997–2005.

assistant minister at Lakewood First Presbyterian Church in Long Beach, California, before becoming associate pastor at the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., a church that also had been designed by architect Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia.

While in Washington, he met his wife Monica, a stockbroker from Grosse Pointe, Michigan. As a pastor from the National Church, Stoker traveled and preached in Africa; Russia; and Edinburgh, Scotland. He also led many church trips to Israel, Scotland, and Germany to see the famous Passion play at Oberammergau. After six years at National Presby-

terian, where President Ronald Reagan often worshipped, Stoker accepted a call to go to South Jacksonville Presbyterian. By the time he answered the call to First Church in Gastonia on December 26, 1996, Stoker and his wife had three children, Andrew, age four, Sarah, two, and Nathan, seven months.

Stoker began his ministry on March 10, 1997, in a very unusual way. Before he arrived at the church, he began receiving telephone calls asking him about a former music director at the church, the Reverend Herff Applewhite. Stoker wrote in the church newsletter, "I remember when I first heard the report on television, I said to myself, 'This is going to be damaging to the Christian cause. Please don't let this cult leader be a Presbyterian.' When I arrived at the church that morning, I found mobile news trucks broadcasting by satellite in the parking lot. Inside I was greeted by reporters. I discovered that not only was Herff Applewhite a former Presbyterian, he was a former employee of First Presbyterian Church!"

Applewhite was the leader of the Heaven's Gate cult in Rancho Santa Fe, California, where he and thirty-eight members committed mass sui-

Left to right: Dr. David Stoker, Rev. John Pruitt, Rev. Patrick Perryman.

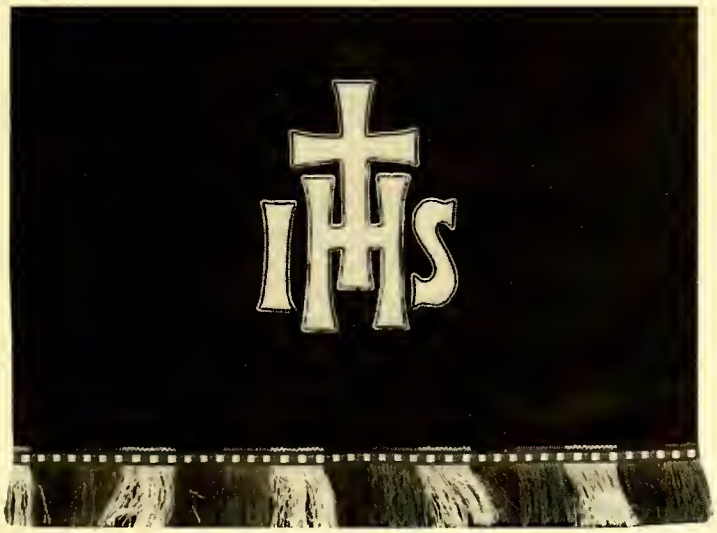
Reformation Sunday, 2004. Left to right: John Calvin (Brian Allf), John Knox (Noel Johnson), and Martin Luther (Chris Parsons).

cide on three successive days starting on March 23, 1997. They believed that the Hale-Bopp comet's passing would reveal a spaceship coming for their souls to take them to another planet. During Applewhite's Gastonia service, he had no cult associations and was perceived as a skillful musician.

Stoker said one of the reasons for the attractiveness of the call to First Church was its potential. "This church has incredible rich resources in every way, certainly rich resources in personnel and people, the leaders and the leadership in this church and in Gastonia and Gaston County," he said. "The striking sanctuary itself is a witness to the community. Everyone knows this church. It has been so involved in mission and so involved in the betterment of the community through its financial resources and leadership."

Soon after Stoker arrived in 1997, the church underwent another goal-setting. Called Vision 2000, the committee was headed by Ralph Robinson Jr. and included a Sessional retreat and congregational meetings.

A consultant, Carolyn Weese of Multi-Staff Ministries in Goodyear,



Elements of communion. The bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. The IHS banner is a symbol of the church, representing the Greek words for Jesus Christ.

Arizona, spent eight days at the church conferring with more than 250 members. Weese's thirty-four-page report on November 21, 1997, was a hard-hitting analysis of the nuts and bolts of the church's operation. She recommended changes to staff, organizational design, financial strategy, and ministerial programs. Such recommendations were controversial and divisive.

"Some recommendations may require change," Weese wrote. "All of the recommendations are made in order to move the church out of neutral and into a growing mode." Weese's negative report proved to be controversial among church members, but eventually several of her recommendations were adopted. "We knew we had some problems going in, but our

main concern was we wanted an outside consultant for a clear view," said Vision 2000 committee member Tom Efird. "A number of items were very definitely followed up—for example, her recommendations that the church's appearance needed to be spiffed up." A number of major renovations were accomplished, including more offices. First Presbyterian staff members were replaced and office volunteers were phased out. In spite of a difficult adjustment, the goal-setting was completed.

After the goal-setting process was completed in 2001, Stoker said,

> The bottom line was that people said they wanted to grow spiritually and I think we have done that. We have instituted a new contemporary worship service called the Joy Service. Under the leadership of elder Mark Davis, a committee began to meet in 2000 to study whether or not our church needed to add a "contemporary praise" service. The committee met for over one and a half years with the first year "bathed in prayer." Once decided and approved by the Session, the committee chose the name of "Joy in the Morning," and the first JOY Service was held on June 23, 2002. Lee Taylor, elder serving the committee, said of this new service, "The JOY

Henderlite Bible Class teachers. Left to right: Alex Hall, Geof Planer, Noel Johnson, Charlie Grissom, Tom Efird.

Joy in the Morning contemporary service, September 2004.

Service is structured by the Session to include all worship standards and sacraments as required in the Book of Order in the Presbyterian Church, USA. Even though the Christian music and instruments are considered contemporary, the dress is casual and a video screen is used. The sermons are based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Services may include drama and current event videos, performances by our various children's choirs and special speakers. Growth has been steady and this new service has become a vital part of our church's life."

In addition to this innovative service, church school classes have come to include a broadened curriculum. More than 300 people

2004 Session. Seated: Marion Call, Sarah Abernethy, Elizabeth Sumner, Susan Stover, Annabelle Kelly, Martha Beal, Gail Ebner, Jean Marie Torrence. Standing: David Stoker, W. W. Dickson, Brian Schroeder, Lee Taylor, James Blair, Gordon Quarles, Charles Gallman, Ben Morrow, John Bridgeman, Lon Waggoner, Steve Brittain, David King, Grady Kennington.

Shelly Carter, Congregational Care Ministry, 2004.

2004 deacons. First row: Carl Kunkle, Mary Sumner, Peggy Robertson, Mary Layton, Judith Planer, Beverly Sumner, John Lemmon. Second row: Beverly Bradshaw, Anna Fanning, Linda Nelson, Elizabeth Thrower, Rebecca Adams, Barbara Hammerle, Patricia McCurry. Third row: Scott Pierce, Thomas Brown, Thomas Kirkham, Will Hooker, Larry Wilson, Robert Buckles, John Sherron, Benjamin Beasley, Rebecca Roberts.

have taken the "Experiencing God" class, and the Sunday school classes have grown with a 17 percent increase in Christian Education enrollment.

I am so proud of First Presbyterian's involvement in the building of Third Street Presbyterian Church (see photo in color insert), and of our involvement with the new Interfaith Hospitality Network where we house people in need during one week every quarter. I am proud of our involvement feeding children at the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club four nights each month. I am grateful that we remain one of the largest contributors to the Crisis Assistance Ministry to feed the hungry. I am grateful to God that during this ministry we

have built the third, fourth and fifth Habitat for Humanity houses. Ten percent of all the Habitat Houses in Gaston County have been built by First Presbyterian Church. Sharing the responsibility for these good missions with other churches is a bonding experience for all.

In September 2001, Dr. Stoker participated in a Presbyterian peacemaking trip to the nation of Jordan. He and fourteen other Presbyterian pastors were returning to New York City on the morning of September 11. After the terrorist attack, Dr. Stoker's plane was rerouted to Shannon, Ireland, where he and the other pastors in his group remained stranded for eight days. During that tense period, First Presbyterian rallied around Dr. Stoker's family. Also during his absence, Associate Pastors John Pruitt and Patrick Perryman gave leadership in a particularly moving worship service for all those affected by 9/11.

In his leisure time, Dr. Stoker enjoys golf, world travel, Boy Scouts, and family time with Monica and their three children. He and his wife enjoy

The 2003–2004 PET committee. Left to right: Liz Current, Liz Sumner, Gene Matthews, Dan LaFar, Doug Stover, Pat Morrow, Dr. David Stoker, Bill Adams. Absent: Sally Robinson, Tim Efird, Ring T. Stafford.

Iris Willcox, Irene Cherry, and Mary Katherine Keith in the Heritage Room, 2004.

traveling. His favorite form of recreation is tending to his three hives of bees, a hobby he began as a Boy Scout at the age of fourteen.

A personal friend and church member said of Dr. Stoker, "David came to First Presbyterian at a time when the national church was in a era of change. He has served us in that change."

At a regular Session meeting on June 26, 2005, Dr. Stoker announced to the Session that he had activated his Personal Information Form and he was presently seeking a new call or vocation. The following month at a called Session meeting, Dr. Stoker was awarded a six month sabbatical. This gift was approved following Dr. Stoker's request to terminate his pastoral relationship with First Presbyterian Church.

> *And now may God strengthen you in His Glorious might . . . and may Jesus Christ His Son go before you to lead you . . . above you to protect you . . . beneath you to sustain you in your times of trouble. May Christ Jesus be beside you to be your friend . . . and may He dwell within you to fill you with His love and His peace that nothing in the world can take away! Amen.*
>
> *—Colossians 1:11, traditional benediction of Dr. David C. Stoker, senior minister, 1997–2005*

*Chapter Eleven*

# SCOUTING

*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

*—I Timothy 4:12*

As an Eagle Scout, Dr. Stoker was pleased to be at the helm of the church on November 14, 1998, when Boy Scout Troop 11 (see photo in color insert), formed in the church in 1923, celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. Troop 11 is a legend in Boy Scouting circles. The anniversary celebration was a glorious affair attended by Jere B. Ratcliffe, the chief executive of Boy Scouts of America, and several hundred people. Among the honored guests were a number of prominent Gastonia area business leaders who have become Eagle Scouts in Troop 11. They included former Gastonia Mayor James B. (Jick) Garland and Duke Kimbrell, president and chief executive officer of Parkdale Mills, whose father C. C. Kimbrell had served as Scoutmaster of Troop 11 from 1935 until 1941. He again served this troop as Master from 1943 to 1947. Garland, who served as mayor from 1987 to 1997, grew up in the church. His father and mother, Peter W. Garland and Kathleen Boyce Garland, were faithful members, and his maternal great-grandfather was Captain J. Q. Holland, a member of the first Session.

The headquarters for the eleven-county Piedmont Council Scout headquarters was constructed on Franklin Avenue in memory of C. C. Kim-

Cub Pack/Den 2, circa 1950. Left to right: Jimmy Franklin, Dick Jarman, Tom Watson, Bill Jarman, Billy Wetzell, Bill Wyche, Jimmy Taylor, Marshall LaFar, Leslie McLean.

C. C. Kimbrell Boy Scout Service Center.

brell. A complete list of recipients of the prestigious Silver Beaver Award is included with the appendix. In 2004, Troop 11 had forty-three Scouts with ten adult leaders, including the present Scoutmaster, Steve Owens, who took over in 1996. In 2000, the troop was chosen as one of only fifteen in the United States to be invited to the International Scout Camporee in Michigan.

Boy Scout Troop 11, 2004, is plate 6 in the color insert. *Kneeling:* Lee Rollins, Jack Collier, Jack Meakin, James Collier, Joseph Vaughn, James Rios, Sam Roach, Ben Rowley. Seated: Andrew McCully, Will Choquet, Thomas Hauer, Preston Dole, Harrison McSpadden, Charles Nason, Matthew Knight, Jamie Sims. *Standing:* Lee Spencer, John Rowley (adult), Turner Vaughn, Michael Sims (adult), Anderson Gibbons, Turner Allison, Parker Sytz, Connor McSpadden, John Faine, Steve Owens (Scoutmaster), Brandon Jones, Ernest Sumner, Ethan Browning, A. J. Current, Brandon Smith.

The Scouting program was expanded over the years by the addition of Girl Scouts. Since the First Church Girl Scout troop was organized in the 1920s, many women and some men have been active. The first leaders were Miss Sarah Gardner and Miss Mary John Howe. At that time, the girls were either Girl Scouts or Brownies. First Presbyterian now serves all levels: Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, and Senior Girl Scouts (see photo in color insert). From the start of Girl Scouting in Gaston County, the women of First Presbyterian have assumed leadership positions. In 1933, Lucia Groves Mercer was the first chairperson and commissioner of the Gaston County Girl Scouts. Marguerite Ring Torrence held that position in 1939, a time of tremendous growth at Camp Rotary, and she oversaw the installation of a swimming pool.

During the pastorate of the Reverend Ellis, there were three active Girl Scout troops. Leaders were Miss Rebecca Falls, senior troop; Miss Mary Olive Walker, intermediate; and Mrs. Arthur Spencer Jr. (Marguerite), Brownies. Helen Ragan Barnett was commissioner of the Gaston County Girl Scouts in 1945, and her husband, Joe Barnett, served as treasurer for many years. Under the direction of Carolyn Warren Sumner, the Pioneer Council celebrated the Silver Jubilee of Girl Scouting on March 11, 1958. Camp Rotary's twenty-fifth anniversary was in 1963, with Jean

Brownie Troop 15 in 1963. Front row: Harriett Benson, Holly Williams, Ibby Page, Susan Kelly, Virginia Patrick, Peggy Upchurch, Jamie Minges, Dottie Zeigler, Barbara Sudduth. Second row: Cindy Bennett, Betty Hamner, April Anderson, Betsy Culp, Helen Beal, Bobi Smith, Janet Brendle, Ann Bryant, Leigh Ann Robinson. Third row, troop leaders: Annelle Kelly, Mary Ann Patrick, Margaret Upchurch.

Groves Dixon at the council's head. She was followed by Mary Lytle in 1964, when the two camps, Camp Rotary and Camp Kiwanis, were integrated. Margaret Dunn Upchurch was the president in 1966, when the council purchased the property for Camp Golden Valley. Brownie Smyre, a longtime Cadette leader, was president in 1979, when a basketball court, tennis court, and backpacking trail were added to Camp Golden Valley. The Marguerite Ring Torrence Service Center was purchased in 1989, when Julia Shovelin was the president. Ring Torrence oversaw the successful capital fund campaign that paid for the new service center. B'Ann Vance served as public relations and fund-raising director of the community program and lent stability and innovative leadership.

Girl Scout Sunday, March 2005, is plate 7 in the color insert. *First Row:*

Leeann Harris, Carlisle Harris, unknown, Mamie Buckles, Jordan Bryant, Michelle Vaughn, unknown, Krista Payne, Pressley Howe, unknown, Morgan Bryant. *Second Row:* Hailey Collis, Anna Paschall, Julia Kay Reese, Anna Allf, unknown, Emily Rhodes, Hannah Newcombe, Bailey Bullock, Tori Rhinehart. *Third Row:* Jeanne Allf, Emily Collis, Natalie Jones, Coralie Watts, Sarah Winget, Maddie Bone, unknown, Georgia Belk, Mary Lanier Williams, Addy Goff, unknown. *Fourth Row:* Jennifer Newcombe, Erica Payne, Gwen Foster, Emma Nelli, Parker Hodges, Elizabeth Black, Hannah O'Neill, Garrison Hodges, Whitner Wise, Shelton Winget. *Fifth Row:* Lori Rutherford, Katie Reese, Marti Morris, Kenna Watts, Beverly Bradshaw, Debbi Cockfield, Tyler Bullock, Anna Bryant.

Throughout the years, hundreds of First Presbyterian women have served as leaders of the troops of the church. They have helped the girls develop their own leadership skills using the democratic process of the Girl Scout program. Because of the dedication of the women of the church, hundreds of girls in our extended church area have had their lives enriched and have developed as competent, caring citizens.

Marguerite Ring Torrence Girl Scout Service Center.

Girl Scout Troop 74 in 1964. Back row: Rose Forrest, Jane Rankin, Nina Forrest, Ann Culp, Margaret Lawson, Katherine Parks, Katherine Hamner, Susan Owensby, Judy Hooks, Louise Eyler. Middle row: Lou Anne Talley, Sandra Moore, Karen Walker, Mary Ann Cole, Jane Albright, Debbie Williams, Patsy Brison, Carolyn Eaker, Dell Richardson, Ann Watson. Front row: Mary Wetzell, Debbie Feuer, Lee Whitener, Ginny Armstrong, Linda Long, Marjorie Williams, Elizabeth Akers, Tem Dickson, Susan Tull, Sandy Thomas, Shirley Hendrix.

*Our Father, bless now those who stand at this dividing point in their lives, that they may know their work is not done, but only beginning. Be present with them as they continue their pursuit of knowledge necessary to equip them for mastery of life.*

*Help them not to be greedy and haughty, but instead to use their time and treasure to build a better world.*

*Send us out with a commitment of mind and heart to promote the welfare and serve the common good of all.*

*—From a prayer of commencement, 1983, by the Reverend Dr. James G. Stuart, senior minister, 1968–1988*

*Chapter Twelve*

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

*Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teaches in all good things.*

*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

*—Galatians 6:6, 9, 10*

First Church has never forgotten its commitment to maintain strong religious-education programs for its membership. Building on its legacy, the church entered a new era in 1961 with the advent of the new facilities. In the beginning, the Sunday school superintendent's main job was to recruit and supply Sunday school teachers and their helpers. Over the years, outstanding lay leaders held the post, but slowly the position gave way to the Christian Education Committee and assigned assistant or associate ministers as Directors of Christian Education. By 1961, the educational program was divided into primary, elementary, junior high, and senior high age groups. Macie Ormand was the chair in charge of Christian Education in the primary and elementary divisions.

In 1962, Ellen Fain Bowen became the founding director of the Presbyterian Weekday Program, a preschool program that provided scholarships to deal with the need for an integrated student body. Mrs. William L.

Mickie Andrews' last day at Presbyterian Weekday School, with Bailey Bullock.

Vacation Bible School, 1998.

Wetzell Jr. (Nan) succeeded Bowen, and Dorothy McKenzie followed her in May 1974, retiring in 1998. It was under McKenzie's untiring effort and outstanding leadership that the Presbyterian Weekday School became accredited in 1988 by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

"We started on a shoestring, a broken shoestring," recalled veteran teacher Mickie Andrews. The school that had started with twenty-five children had more than two hundred by 2003, when Andrews retired after thirty-nine years of service. (She is still called today when needed.) The present director is Paulette Elmore.

The through-the-week school is only one part of the highly successful educational program at First Church. The Children's Ministry for Infants through Fifth Graders also includes six levels of Sunday school (kindergarten through fifth grades), Children's Church, the nursery, Mothers' Morning Out, Vacation Bible School, and the Fall Festival. Laura Parsons has been the director of Children's Ministry since 2000. Although her primary service is to recruit and equip the parents and volunteers to proceed with the ministry to children, Laura works directly with children when

Our teams are tough!

she gives children's sermons in worship and when she leads the four-week children's sacraments class for fourth graders in preparation for World Wide Communion. The nursery continues to grow, and nursery coordinator Mary Reese came on board in the fall of 2002.

In April 2001, the Children's Ministry buried a time capsule for the playground dedication to be reopened in 2021. It included such items as a sippy cup, a story quilt, a photograph album, an eight-millimeter videocassette, letters to children of the future, facts about the present, and hopes for the future. Also inside were the school class roster book and the Children's Ministry Sunday school roster for 2000–2001 and various other items. Mrs. Dan Page (Ibby) and Mrs. Joseph Holman (Amy) chaired the event.

One former member of First Church remembers Vacation Bible School in the late 1920s ran for several weeks under the leadership of Dr. Henderlite and the Reverend Joe Overmyer. Bible study and memorizing scripture were emphasized. Betty Sloan Stowe recalls that Lucille Rankin and Myrtle Warren were teachers. Stowe remembers that when she could not

Atlanta would like to have this group!

Learning and teaching the Ten Commandments.

recite from memory chapter thirteen of I Corinthians as assigned, Miss Warren had her go on the steps until she could recite the chapter. The children enjoyed many activities, including picnics, various games, swimming, trips to Crowders Mountain, and exploring a haunted house.

In the adult area, the Henderlite Bible Class and the Ladies' Bible Class enjoy the most consistent teachers and use the Uniform Lesson Series. Other adult classes—the Seekers, Koinonia, and Connections classes—choose various topics and enlist their own teachers. Until the early 1990s, organization of the church school was directed by the Christian Education Committee, which reported directly to the Session. Now a more flexible church-school operation exists.

First Church also is still active in such programs as Habitat for Humanity, and in June 2004 took on a new challenge with the beginnings of the Interfaith Hospitality Network. It is a nationwide network of caring churches and individuals who are given the Christ-like charge to help needy families get back on their feet by providing temporary housing and Christian support. Under Elder Grady Kennington's active leadership, more than seventy-five First Church members signed up to participate with Betsy King and Beth Silvers as cochairs.

Henderlite Bible Class prepares for a fellowship meal. Left to right: David Dickson, Charles Massey, Noel Johnson, Bill Quarles, Phil Williams, Dan Wilson, Jim McKenize, Michael Dickson.

Henderlite Bible Class, circa 1992.

Top to bottom:

Connections Sunday school class, established 2004.

Ladies' Bible Class, 1998.

Susan Allen and Grady Kennington with Interfaith Hospitality guests, 2005.

Our future thinking.

The future looks extremely bright for two particular areas—youth activities and music. For many years the youth program has been outstanding in the life of First Church. In the 1940s Easter sunrise services were joint programs of First Presbyterian and First Methodist youth. Adults transported the groups on trucks to the foot of Crowders Mountain. With the aid of large flashlights they climbed to the peak while it was still dark. At the very top of the mountain they had a most meaningful service of worship just as the sun rose. A former DRE said recently, "I will never forget Mildred Romer singing 'I Know That My Redeemer Liveth' as the sun was rising over the mountain." Afterward, a hearty breakfast at First Methodist Church was enjoyed by all the early worshippers.

Since Pratt Butler became youth director in June 2002, participation and attendance have accelerated. Retreats, ski trips, movies, and special events, which were begun earlier, have been contributing to growth in the youth program. Butler, a UNC–Chapel Hill business-school graduate and a one-man whirlwind, can be seen all over the county attending sports events and other activities that First Church youth are involved in. Unbelievably, more than sixty youth manage to get up early every Thurs-

day for breakfast and Bible study at 6:30 A.M. at Alfred and Charlie's BBQ on New Hope Road, where they meet in same-sex groups called Morning Montage and Flamingle. On one particular morning, even after snow had caused school to be cancelled, forty youth still showed up.

Butler, who is from Charlotte, had been considering a job in Colorado, but heard about the First Church job and jumped at the chance. He grew up as a Presbyterian; his grandfather, the Reverend Clyde Pratt, was pastor of several churches in Charlotte and elsewhere.

"We have had a very active youth program for the past sixty-five years, but over the last two we have really moved to another level," said Grady Kennington, a youth leader at First Church since 1978.

Every other year, the senior high school students journey to Jamaica on a mission trip, and every year the mid-highs travel to Appalachia on a mission trip to help repair homes of the less fortunate. This mission ministry is the exponent of the ICE program begun by Pete Carruthers in the 1970s.

Thursday breakfast and Bible study at 6:30 *A.M.* at Alfred and Charlie's, where the youth meet in same-sex groups called Morning Montage and Flamingle. April 2004.

In 2005, Staff Sergeant Samuel Wilds visited the Afterschool Program and presented the class with a United States flag flown in Iraq during his service there.

*Our Father in Heaven, we gather this morning in this house of worship to lift our voices in prayer and praise to You. With the psalmist of old, we say "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." We come rejoicing that through Christ we can come before You, confident that You hear our prayers and respond to our needs. You alone are worthy of our worship, O God.*

*We are thankful this day for our church, First Presbyterian. We are grateful for the ways it has touched so many lives for so many years. We lift before you those of our church who have special needs this day. For those who are sick in body or mind, we pray for healing. May they sense Your presence in a very special and powerful way. There are others that come to our mind, and we whisper their names now silently to You.*

*Our hearts are full, dear God, with gratitude for ordinary blessings: the unreserved joy of children, the steady love of friends and spouses and parents and grandparents, the warmth of the sun*

*on our faces, fresh breezes, and life-giving rain, the beauty of art and music. O God, you have so richly blessed us in so many ways and we are so deeply grateful.*

*In the midst of all we do, remind us of how much You love us, and that You ask in return that we love You and love others in this world.*

*Lord, make us all your instruments . . .*

*Where there is hatred, let us spread love.*

*Where there is doubt, faith.*

*Where there is despair, hope.*

*Where there is sadness, joy.*

*For we make these prayers in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray . . . Our Father, who art in heaven . . .*

*—Prayer offered September 7, 2002, by David C. Stoker, senior minister, 1997–2005*

*Plate 1.* Church exterior with Crowders Mountain in the distance. Photograph by LOF Productions.

*Plate 2.* Senior High Beach Bash, 2004.

*Plate 3.* The Heritage Room.

*Plate 4.* Big decisions being made: Cas Taylor, Pat Morrow, Gary Evans, Bo Abernethy.

*Plate 5.* Drama performance, *The Sound of Music.*

*Plate 6.* Boy Scout Troop 11, 2004. See caption on page 151.

*Plate 7.* Girl Scout Sunday, March, 2005. See caption on pages 152–153.

*Plate 8.* Our church bus and crew: Bob Jackson, Wilson Dunn, John Mason III.

*Plate 9.* An enthusiastic youth program, 2004.

*Plate 10, above.* Clan tartans used in the annual Kirkin' of the Tartans service.
*Plate 11, right.* Easter flower cross and stained-glass window.

*Plate 12.* Easter Sunrise Service in the columbarium.

*Plate 13.* Dr. Harry Moffett in the Belgium Congo, April 1960, with his five-pound tiger fish!

*Plate 14, below.* Ground breaking for new Third Street Presbyterian Church, a largely African-American congregation on Highland Avenue. First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia gave them $300,000 to rebuild their church in 2000.

*Plate 15.* Our 2000–2001 Presbyterian Weekday School students and Dorothy McKenzie —bless them!

*Plate 16.* An active young choir.

*Chapter Thirteen*

# WORSHIP AND MUSIC

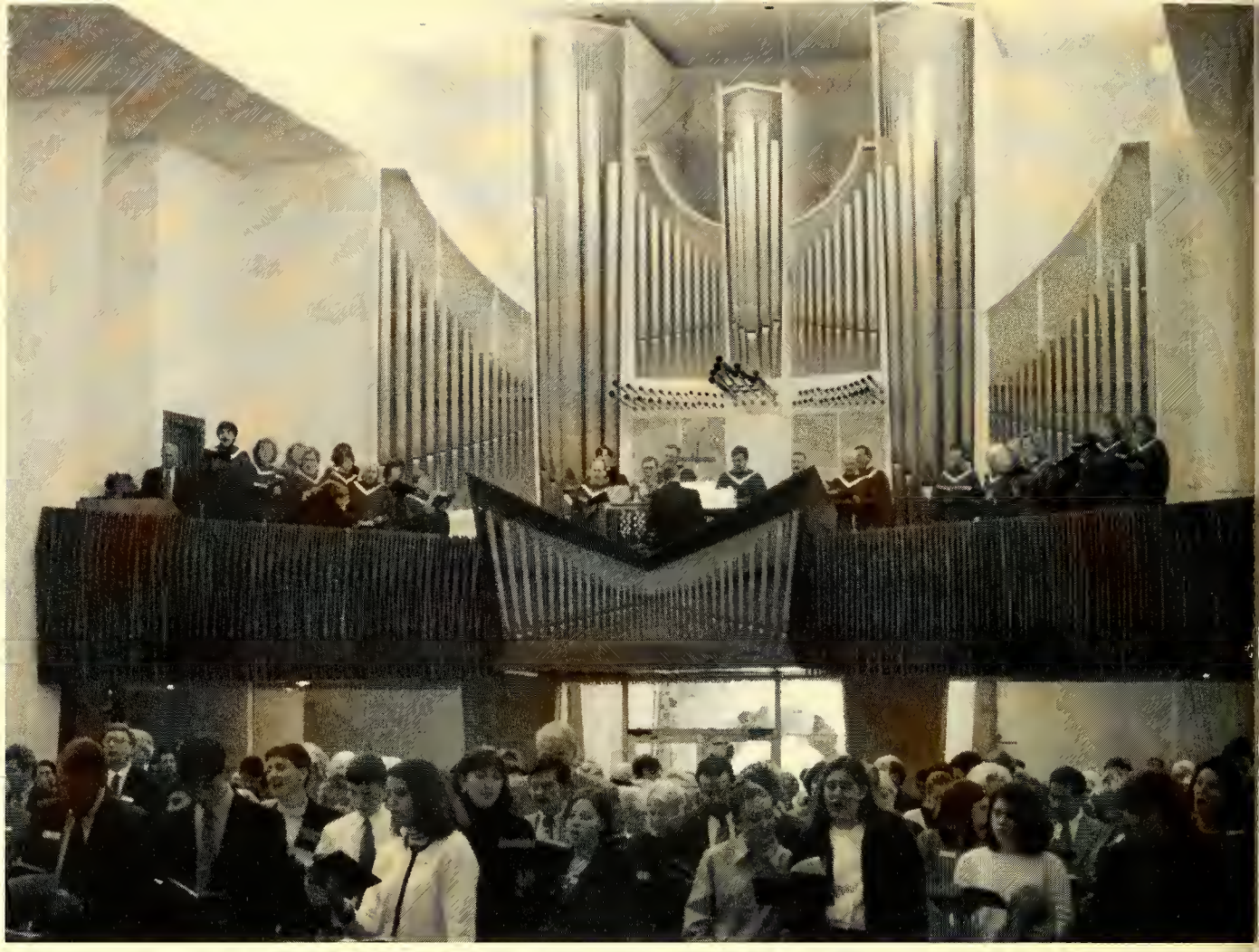
*And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with trumpets.*

—*I Chronicles 13:8*

*At a time the universal church has lost its sphere of influence upon the declining culture of our time, it is imperative that the church takes its rightful historic place as the cultural center of the community through music, worship, and the arts.*

—*Timothy Belk, organist,*
*quoted in* The Gaston Gazette, *October 2003*

Music always has been important at First Church. From the very beginning, the church has had a succession of talented musicians. Each added to the program, which now consists of many singing and handbell ensembles. These programs offer all ages the opportunity for participation and service to the church community and for personal education and fellowship. These opportunities come through a variety of programs. Choir ensembles, which include adult, youth, and children's choirs, have grown in program and participation, especially since the 1940s. Membership in one of the various choirs may start at age four. First Church member Bill Kelly recalls being in choirs for twelve years under Choir Director Edith Warren. Mrs. Warren retired in 1969, after having replaced the



Sanctuary showing choir loft and organ.

Reverend Herff Applewhite in 1953. "I was asked to stay for three months, and I stayed fifteen years," she said. Mrs. Warren was the chairman of an unofficial committee of choir members in 1961 that recommended that the choir and the organ be placed in the gallery of the sanctuary in the new building. John Hebblethwaite followed Edith Warren as director of music and organist.

Hughes Huffman later became choir director. (His wife, Debbie Huffman, was organist.) Mr. Huffman organized the Madrigal Singers, a Victorian-costumed double quartet that sang at churches and organizations in Gastonia and the surrounding area.

In 1985 Marcia Mau became music director. She built a children's choir program with the help of volunteer directors, and it was a part of the Wednesday-night Stuff 'n' Study program. She conducted major choral works with the Sanctuary Choir, which often included other church

One of our many talented youth choirs.

choirs. The handbell program was also expanded during her ministry. She introduced Meet the Composer weekend with Helen Hubbard Kemp as guest conductor/composer.

Jeff Weiss continued the Meet the Composer weekend, with other area churches participating. During his tenure, Allan Pote, Hal Hobson, and André Thomas were guest composers. Weiss took the Youth Choir on an out-of-state tour. In 2003, Anna Laura Page, a noted composer of choral and handbell music, was the guest artist. She was commissioned by Janet Jackson and Leslie Lewis to write, "May the Grace of God Go with You," a choral benediction for voices and handbells. It was premiered under Miss Page's direction at the eleven o'clock Sunday morning worship service.

Mrs. Ernest L. McFarland (Mary) became director of music in 1999, following her second tenure as interim director. Mrs. McFarland is a graduate of James Madison University and received a master's degree in voice performance from East Carolina University. A certified carillonneur and member of the Guild of Carillonneurs of North America, she has the honor of having been invited to play for the National Congress of all carillonneurs at their annual meeting. She directs a variety of programs. Currently "Ring and Sing" is presented by the five handbell ensembles each

Mary McFarland, music director, 1999–.

December, with Christmas carols sung between the selections. The same groups of ringers present "Spring Ring" in May. The adult ringers participate in the yearly Mid-Carolinas Bell Festival in Charlotte in November. The Sanctuary Choir has at least two special music offerings annually during morning worship, one in December, and the other during Lent. In December 1998, the Sanctuary Choir sang "Keyboards and Carols," arranged by Stephen Nielson and Ovid Young, duo pianists providing accompaniment. Choir members participate in the interdenominational mass choir for the annual community Thanksgiving-eve service. The Senior High Singers and Ringers and Middle High Singers and Ringers

Opposite: The 2004 Sanctuary Choir. First row: Wanda Campbell, Jo Anne de la Vega, Jayne Howe, Charlene Swilling, Betty Burrell, Leslie Lewis. Second row, standing: Mary McFarland, director; Suzanne McLean; Trip Stewart; Melanie Burch. Second row, seated: B'Ann Vance, Janet Leissner, Dottie LaFar, Katie Clark, Arlena Meek. Third row: Jeff Hudgins, Charlie Grissom, Tom Watson, Roger Hill, Charlie Burrell, Ben Morrow, Brian Schroeder. Absent: Bill Sherrill, Jim Poag, Beverly Poag, Laura Parson, Elaine Deason, Anna Renfro, Ellen Downey, Jan Jackson.

Handbell choir

offer a youth vesper concert in the spring. The Sanctuary Choir, Senior High Singers, and Middle School Singers combine to present a program in the fellowship hall for informal functions.

"Lessons and Carols" and a special Christmas Eve service add at least one children's choir to those already mentioned. All of the children's choirs have a special Christmas Eve service. They also provide all of the music for the eleven o'clock Palm Sunday service. At the close of the year, they have a choir and talent program. Each June, thirty to forty church choir members and directors attend the weeklong Music and Worship Conference in Montreat. Many children begin attending as rising fifth graders and continue until their high school graduation.

Old church records mention Mrs. C. E. Adams as one of the first organists, followed by Miss Stella Holland. No salary was paid until 1906. Mrs. W. Ralph Armstrong (Elizabeth) served as organist from 1946 to 1959. A graduate of the Guilmant Organ School in New York, she studied at Juilliard School in New York City and at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. A member of the American Guild of Organists, Mrs. Armstrong had taught organ at Limestone College in Gaffney,

Nativity reenactment, 1996.

Judy Planer and her father Dr. Doug Aldrich, May 2004.

John Siler, organist, 1981–2002.

South Carolina, and at Bessie Tift College in Forsyth, Georgia. Mrs. Armstrong was considered among the finest organists in the nation and often was asked to perform at national events.

In 1981, the talented and beloved John Siler became First Church's organist, serving for more than twenty years. He loved the quality organ this church offered. With a Ph.D. in music education from the University of South Carolina, Dr. Siler is also a member of American Guild of Organists. Dr. Siler, generous with his time and talent, was always available for ceremonies of the church and its parishioners. His organ concerts were highly anticipated events in the Gaston County musical community. Members of First Church of Gastonia honored Dr. Siler by celebrating his eighteenth anniversary with a reception and a generous gift.

Timothy Belk became First Church's organist in 2003. A graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, Belk received a North Carolina Emerging Artist grant for postgraduate studies at the Conservatoire de Mu-

Timothy Belk, organist, 2003–.

sique in Geneva, Switzerland, where he was a pupil of the renowned organist Lionel Rogg. He brought to the position a broad performing and service-playing background as well as concert organization skills, as demonstrated in the creation of a new Music, Worship, and Arts Series. The ambitious series, underwritten with no expense to the church, features renowned concert artists. The special series began October 19, 2003, with Susan Landale, organist at Les Invalides, Paris; followed by Nova Vocce, a women's ensemble from Charlotte, on December 13, 2003. Concert pianist John Noel from Houston, Texas, presented a beautiful concert on January 18, 2004, and on March 21, 2004, Gastonia native and mezzo-soprano Chriscynethia Floyd was featured. San Francisco–based vocal ensemble Chanticleer performed on November 24, 2004, and the world-famous Vienna Choir Boys brought the year's series to its climax on February 5, 2005. This prestigious program series of music, worship, and arts brings acclaim and opportunity to First Church's musical commitment. "The series is not just for music," Tim Belk said, "the church has always had an history of excellence in music, and this ambitious series reflects the Church's tradition."

First Presbyterian Church always had provided fine musical instruments for the music program. The first organ, a Moëller instrument, was dedicated in 1898 and had to be pumped by hand, usually by the sexton. It is recorded that on one or two occasions, he had to be roused from a nap at the conclusion of the sermon to start the organ in order that the pipes be pumped and the last hymn sung. This organ was sold to the congregation of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in 1914. It was later electrified and was still in use in 1948. It had a very sweet tone, and some of our members would occasionally visit St. Mark's to hear it.

A new Kimball pipe organ was installed at First Church in 1914, followed by a Kilgen in 1934. As noted earlier, the wonderful Casavant organ in today's Sanctuary was installed by Casavant Frères Limited of Quebec in 1961 at a cost of $68,000. First Church members Mary Sexton Smyre Templeton and her husband Elmer Templeton were instrumental in making sure the church had "the finest organ available." Richard Peek, music director and organist at Charlotte's Covenant Presbyterian Church, was the church's consultant. The company was so proud of this installation that it included a photograph of the organ on its 1962 Christmas card. The chapel organ was built by Schlicker of Buffalo, New York, with Richard Peek as consultant again. Costing $14,874, the organ was premiered at Montreat for its 1967 Summer Conference and then installed in the chapel.

From the beginning, the design of the church building had included a set of bells, a carillon, which would gracefully sweep skyward. A carillon, defined as a set of no fewer than twenty-five bells, dates to the fourteenth century in Europe. Funds were unavailable for a carillon when the church

Confirmation class, April 9, 2000.

Installation of the carillon, 1972–1973. The 1895 cornerstone was lost behind the carillon, only to be rediscovered in 2000 when the carillon was renovated.

Bells arriving for carillon after being refurbished.

was built in 1961. In 1972, a special committee headed by W. D. Lawson III recommended the installation of a carillon in the sanctuary tower.

Lawson reported that the cost would be about $55,000, of which $33,235 had already been pledged. Memorial gifts for the carillon are recorded in the Church Memorial Book in the Heritage Room. Other members of the committee were John M. Akers, William A. Current, W. Duke Kimbrell, B. Frank Matthews, T. Craig Watson, and Charles E. Zeigler. The Memorial Carillon of forty-nine bells was designed and installed by the Dutch firm of Eijsbouts Foundry. The Memorial Carillon was dedicated on Sunday, November 25, 1973, with a dedicatory concert by carillonneur Arie Abbenes from Asten, the Netherlands.

The largest bell weighs 1,411 pounds and measures forty and seven-eighths inches in diameter. Four of the five largest bells bear biblical inscriptions. The fifth largest, weighing 496 pounds, is inscribed, "This carillon is dedicated to the glory of God, in loving memory of those who from their labors rest." The bells gradually descend in size, with the smallest weighing twenty-six pounds. The toll bell at the top of the carillon tower originally rang in the tower of the old church building on Marietta Street.

John Hebblethwaite, who was director of music and organist at First Church when the carillon was installed, became the carillonneur and composed a special piece of music called "Gastonia Change" for the carillon. It was introduced on September 9, 1979. Hebblethwaite also produced a recording of sacred music performed on the First Church Casavant organ.

The carillon was completely renovated and rededicated on Sunday, October 13, 2002. John Courter, one of America's foremost carillonneurs and composers for the instrument, was commissioned by Dr. and Mrs. Raul de la Vega to compose "Scottish Fantasy" for the rededication. First Church members and guests were treated to a recital offered by Mary McFarland, church carillonneur, and Mr. Richard Watson, who completely renovated the carillon. Guests sat outside on folding chairs in the delightful afternoon fall weather.

Traditionally, a program of four carillon recitals is presented annually. A guest artist is invited to play one program, and the remainder of the

The 2004 Communicants Class at "The Pad." Top row: The Rev. Patrick Perryman, Brock Weston, Andrew Dickson, Brittany Hovis, William Quarles, Mary Houston Matthews, Clara Owen, Christine Lanz, Evan Roberts, Ross Wilson, Brendan Withers, William Wren, Kate Fitzmaurice, Dr. David Stoker. Second row: Anna Vaughn, Alex Thomas, Sarah de la Vega, Kendall McCurry, Taylor Hill, Ashley Hovis, Ali Williams. Third row: Jonathan Kimray, Ernest Sumner, Rob Stover, Griffin Wise, Will Choquet.

programs are played by church carillonneurs, whose ranks have included Helen Styers, Peggy Walton, Amelia Pritchett, Charlene Swilling, Jo Anne de la Vega, Trip Stewart, Kim Petit, and Katie Clark.

Yet another beautiful instrument was given to the church in 2000, when a Steinway grand piano finished in walnut was purchased for the sanctuary. On September 17, pianist/composer Loonis McGlohon played a dedicatory program. The Sanctuary Choir sang his composition "Teach Me Lord," and the Carol Choir sang one of his children's anthems.

The position of Director of Children's Music Ministries was created in 1996. Janice Wilkerson, music specialist in the Gaston County Schools

Rev. Patrick Perryman and twins Jack and Henry Current, April 13, 2003.

David Pegram, First Presbyterian's chief photographer, 2003.

and holder of an Orff certification, was hired. Daniel Wynkoop, music instructor at Gaston Day School, replaced her in 2001.

However, the music program has sometimes been less than harmonious. In the 1990s a committee appointed by Session and chaired by Elaine Deason was asked to study the adoption of a new Presbyterian hymnal. Mrs. Deason reported that the committee recommended new blue hymnals to be used in the sanctuary and the chapel. The old, red hymnbooks were to be

used in the fellowship hall and the various Sunday school classrooms. Some elders objected because of the modern terminology used in some hymns. Much of the objection to the new hymnal stemmed from modifying or deleting old favorites that dealt with war—hymns such as the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Onward Christian Soldiers." The Session voted to accept the recommendation twenty-five to five. "I thought the tone of the meeting was remarkable," session moderator John DeBevoise wrote to the congregation in the church newsletter. "On an issue where obviously a number of Elders had strong feelings, they addressed those feelings with love and respect for one another. Now is the time for this congregation to blend together our voices in unity, singing hymns with praise to our Lord and God." Today both the red and blue hymnbooks are used in the sanctuary and chapel.

*Who are we, Lord,*
*that you have called us through these waters*
*and by the cross,*
*to be your people?*
*We are feeble, frail and fallen.*
*We are a stubborn and stiff-necked people.*
*Yet, you love us in spite of this,*
*and you have drawn us to you*
*that we might be molded and shaped*
*into your likeness.*
*Lord, this is love so great*
*that it is almost more than we can bear.*
*This is grace so powerful*
*that it cannot be of ourselves,*
*but can only be your gift.*
*And so Lord we gather around the font*
*and see your hand at work.*
*We make promises as parents*
*and as your people,*
*that we know we cannot fulfill on our own.*

Laying on of hands, the ordination and installation of officers.

*And we are reminded that that is precisely the point.*
*The grace that has fallen on us is not our own doing.*
*The power that moves in these waters has its source only in you.*
*As you brought your people through the waters,*
*and rested them safely on the other side,*
*so you have done for us.*
*You are our beginning and our ending,*
*our life and our meaning.*
*You are our God,*
*and we are your people.*
*Thanks be to God.*
*Amen.*

*—A baptismal prayer for First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, given September 2001 by the Reverend John C. Pruitt, associate minister, 1999–2002*

*Chapter Fourteen*

# LOOKING FORWARD

*Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.*

*He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.*

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

*—Isaiah 40:28–31*

Christian denominations globally are reflecting a change in the church's role today. The Presbyterian Church, like other denominations, is struggling to maintain membership in the face of deteriorating growth in church attendance and programs. The traditional church in the United States, and also in Gastonia, from its earliest establishment was the center of the community. The church came to house community programs that grew the church membership. Now communities have diverse and numerous activities, and such program opportunities are held in many institutions other than the church.

First Church, Gastonia, by remaining loyal to traditional Christian

values and by accepting new attitudes toward the twenty-first-century church, has continued to maintain her church programs. After-school care, innovative youth and music programs, broadened adult educational opportunities, and a choice in time and manner of worship are ways in which First Presbyterian Church has combated the diminishing interest in the global church in the last twenty-five years.

There are a number of current member families of First Church who can look backward and forward at the same time. They are the second-, third-, fourth-, and even fifth-generation members whose fathers, mothers, grandparents, and great-grandparents devoted much of their lives to the church. Perhaps First Church members got a glimpse of their future on Sunday, September 28, 2003, when the more modern Joy in the Morning service and the more sedate, traditional eleven o'clock service were combined for the first time. It resulted in a ninety-minute marathon mixture of praise songs and stately hymns.

History and Archives Committee member Charlton Torrence gave this summary:

> There are so many members who have helped First Church in so many ways and so many times, yet have not truly received their deserved recognition. It would be impossible to name each individual and his or her contributions to the church and not inadvertently overlook a few very special members.
>
> In growing from twenty-two members in 1882 to a present-day membership of 1,315, many changes and decisions have been made, most of them good, but not all. However, changes are what make and help a church become a better church.
>
> Some members have transferred to other churches, just as in 1882, when sixteen members from Olney Presbyterian and four from Union (and two on profession of faith) came together to begin First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia.
>
> First Presbyterian has always been a leader, as well as an inspiring church. First Church is destined to become a greater church in the community and outside it. Maybe, First Church is ready to accept the challenge John DeBevoise made us in February 1995: "A one-

Left to right: the Westminster Confession (England, 1646), the Apostles' Creed (early church), the Nicene Creed (fourth century).

million-dollar benevolence campaign to be conducted internally among the members with no outside consultant!"

As First Presbyterian Church continues into its third century, the exact nature of its future appears uncertain, but the love of the church, collective family values, and the desire to worship together are strong enough to ensure that there will be a First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia for years to come.

Indeed, First Presbyterian's swooping roofline, polished fittings, and full programs stand in amazing contrast to the original churches' ragged congregations of Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus. It was there in the Middle East and Africa that Peter and other apostles, and later St. Paul, drew the theological architecture for the good news of the Gospel. So much of the church has changed to the eye, and yet so little of the church at the heart is different. Central to the church is the proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord. The ways in which First Presbyterian Church has made that proclamation in the last 123 years is the history of First Presbyterian Church. The ways in which First Presbyterian Church continues to make that proclamation is the future of First Presbyterian Church.

# EPILOGUE:

# MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR, 1948

## The Reverend Mr. I. M. Ellis

It is my earnest hope that from the reading of this history of our beloved church will come a fresh appreciation of the spiritual heritage that is ours. Sacrifice, love, and devotion have been manifested through the years by pastors and members. The rediscovery of our accomplishments as they have been blessed by God may also lead us to care intelligently and plan wisely for the future. As someone has said, "Only those can care intelligently about the future to whom the past is dear."

We cannot go forward on the momentum of past generations. We must make our own history. If we are proud of the history of the past, then we, the living, must through our own dedication and devotion move forward to greater achievements in the days to come. This will only be possible as the total membership realizes the responsibility that rests upon every one who names the name of Christ, and who places his name upon the roll of God's church.

In these days of uncertainties and conflicting ideologies, we must look into the future with confidence, realizing that the church has the answer to the world's need, in a loving God, "who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Therefore, let every one of us, deeply grateful for the past, and desiring to be of service to Him in the present and future, renew our vows of dedication as we pray and sing:

*I love Thy Church, O God;*
*Her walls before Thee stand,*

*Dear as the apple of Thine eye,*
*And graven on Thy hand.*
*For her my tears shall fall,*
*For her my prayers ascend;*
*To her my cares and toils be given,*
*Till toils and cares shall end.*

—*Originally printed in the* History of First Presbyterian Church, *by Hugh A. Query, 1948*

# *Acknowledgments*


- David Pegram, who took many of the photographs for this book, has been a member of First Church since 1971. He and his wife Lucille, who were members of New Hope Baptist Church at the time, were driving by First Church one day when he turned to Lucille, and said, "Something is making me go to church here today." They turned in the driveway and went to services that day and have been attending here ever since. Pegram has photographed our church life and has served as the official driver on many trips by the Trotters and on other occasions.
- Robert Ragan of Charlotte, son of Jocelyn Sikes and Caldwell Ragan and a distinguished author in his own right, contributed his experience as a Presbyterian and former First Church member and gave excellent advice on research procedures. The author is grateful to Mr. Ragan.
- Geraldine Johnston, an authority on grammar and punctuation and an active member of First Church, edited the draft for grammatical correctness.
- Lisbet Nielsen has been a willing and consistent support in both research and production for *A Christian Witness.*
- Cookie Brenner, chairman of the Committee of History and Archives, has steered the committee with exceptional wisdom, understanding of the project, and a clear focus. Her untiring efforts and zealous dedication and determination to have an outstanding history that is accurate and inclusive are worthy of note. It can unequivocally be said that without her remarkable wise leadership, this book would not be the outstanding history the committee is pleased to present.
- Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of *A Christian Witness.* The book committee regrets any errors which may remain.

The Committee of History and Archives

# APPENDIX

# *Historical Timeline*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1847 | North Carolina legislature creates Gaston County. |
| 1872 | Railroad relocates to Gastonia from Dallas, North Carolina, creating a trading crossroads. |
| 1875 | The Reverend W. B. Corbett conducts services from railroad depot. |
| 1875–1882 | Services continue from the Falls Hotel, in an old storehouse, and in the old Gastonia Academy until the little First Church is built near Long Avenue. |
| 1877 | Gastonia incorporates, population 200. |
| 1882 | Mecklenburg Presbytery with Union and Olney Churches organize new Presbyterian Church, the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, July 16. |
| | Captain J. Q. Holland, first clerk of Session. |
| | First organ was a reed instrument. |
| 1882–1884 | The Reverend J. J. Kennedy, supply pastor. |
| 1882–1899 | The Reverend M. McG. Shields, pastor, 1897–1904, writes first church history in 1899, covering 1882–1899. Only two copies remain; one is now on exhibit in Heritage Room. His son, Ernest Shields II, writes "Oh, Davidson," the fight song for Davidson College. |
| 1883 | Membership 33, contributions $1,050. |
| | A 35 x 50 brick church seating four hundred and costing $1,500 is dedicated at what is now 211 W. Long Avenue. |
| 1884 | Mrs. A. M. Smyre, first president of Ladies' Aide Society. |
| 1884–1885 | The Reverend L. R. McCormick, supply pastor. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1886 | The Reverend W. E. McIlwaine accepts call as first pastor for First Presbyterian Church half of his time, with the other half at New Hope Presbyterian Church. |
| 1889 | Mrs. R. C. G. Love, first president of Ladies Home and Foreign Missionary Society. |
| 1890 | Membership 141, contributions $1,229. |
| 1891 | The Reverend C. W. Robinson accepts call as first full-time pastor. |
| | Miss Lizzie Adams, lady manager of Children's Missionary Society. Tablet in her honor on display in Heritage Room. |
| | Membership 170, contributions $3,175. |
| 1893 | Membership 205, contributions $2,139. |
| 1893–1896 | The Reverend R. P. Smith accepts call as pastor. Pastor during construction of Marietta Street Church. |
| 1893–1897 | Walter R. Lingle, assistant to Rev. R. P. Smith. He does home mission work in Gaston County and later is president of the Assembly's Training School for lay workers, moderator of the General Assembly, and president of Davidson College. |
| 1895 | Construction of Marietta Street Church. It is of "pressed" red brick from Washington, D.C. Marietta Street Church is completed in nine months. |
| 1896 | The *Charlotte Observer* notes that the Reverend R. P. Smith of First Presbyterian Church in Gastonia writes a monthly church newsletter and suggests other churches should consider publishing a newsletter. |
| 1896–1904 | The Reverend M. McG. Shields accepts call as pastor. |
| 1897 | Marietta Street Church debt is retired. |
| 1898 | Moëller organ purchased for Marietta Street Church. The Moëller organ, which was dedicated in 1898, had to be pumped by hand. |
| | Dr. C. E. Adams is named superintendent of Sabbath school after resignation of Mr. J. A. Boyd. Dr. Adams remains superintendent until Sunday morning Christian education becomes known as Sunday school. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1905 | Dr. R. C. Anderson accepts call as pastor. |
| | Dr. Anderson organizes the Men's Bible Class, later renamed the Henderlite Class in honor of Dr. J. H. Henderlite. |
| 1909 | Miss Alice Daniels works diligently to organize Piedmont Chapel, a mission in a mill village off Broad Street. It thrives and continues successfully until 1970s, when village homes are replaced by commerce. |
| 1912 | Dr. J. H. Henderlite accepts call as pastor. |
| 1914 | Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Craig donate the first Kimball pipe organ. |
| 1915 | North Carolina Presbyterian Synod meets at First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia. This is quite an honor to host the Synod. A photo of the meeting is on display in Heritage Room. |
| 1917 | United States enters World War I. |
| 1918 | The Reverend George Gillespie becomes Dr. Henderlite's first assistant pastor. This indicates the growth of the church and the need for additional administration. |
| 1920 | Mrs. S. A. Kinley, president of Woman's Auxiliary. Woman's Auxiliary institutes Ladies Church Circle program as adopted by the General Assembly. Twelve circles are organized. |
| | Membership 800, contributions $55,076. |
| 1923 | Mr. Dendy serves as first Scoutmaster. |
| 1923–1924 | Mrs. W. Y. Gardner collects Octagon Soap wrappers to finance furnishings (flatware and china) for the church kitchen. China is on display in Heritage Room. |
| 1924 | Membership 928, contributions $53,092. |
| 1926 | Dr. Joe Overmyer, beloved musician, promotes music programs. |
| 1927 | A service is held to honor six couples (members of the church) observing their golden wedding anniversaries: Mr. and Mrs. John F. Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. E. Meek Adams, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Smyre, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Spencer, Rev. and Mrs. J. N. McLean, and Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Ray. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1927 | Membership 975, contributions $50,649. |
| 1929 | Stock market crash. |
| 1929–1934 | Dr. Henderlite's salary is reduced at his request, reflecting economic foreboding in textile center. |
| 1930s | First Presbyterian Church participates in Orthopedic Hospital Ministry. |
| 1930 | Mrs. D. E. McConnell begins Cradle Roll department (first toddler Sunday school). |
| 1931 | The Reverend C. G. McKnight, music director. |
| | Woman's Auxiliary collects $7.00 to furnish Barium Springs Orphanage with celery for Thanksgiving dinner. |
| 1934 | Deacons adopt rotary system. |
| 1935 | Mr. C. C. Kimbrell takes Troop 11 and serves many distinguished years as Scoutmaster. |
| 1936–1948 | Mr. J. E. Lindsey, beloved church sexton, serves with memorable distinction. |
| 1937 | Miss Ola Moton, city missionary. Church sponsors era of home missions. |
| 1938 | Church calls Rev. I. M. Ellis as associate pastor, youth minister, and choir director. |
| | Membership 1,041, contributions $28,470. |
| | Woman's Auxiliary, Mrs. L. N. Patrick, president, pledges nearly $800 for new church carpet. The amount was paid in full in two years. |
| 1940 | The Reverend I. M. Ellis accepts call as pastor. |
| | Membership 1,193, contributions $27,497. |
| 1940s | Mrs. George V. Patterson teaches Nellie Warren Bible Class for more than twenty-five years. |
| | Mr. D. R. LaFar Jr., elder, serves Synod and Davidson College as vice chair of Board of Trustees for many years. Continues distinguished service to local and regional churches. |
| | Mr. T. M. Mackorell, Boy Scoutmaster. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1940 | Mrs. Emmett Morrison encourages Bible education in public schools. |
| 1941 | Miss Bess Jackson becomes church secretary. |
| | Church remodels sanctuary at a cost of $35,000. Choir moves to front of sanctuary. A large wooden door rolls down to allow part of the sanctuary to be used as a Sunday school classroom. |
| | Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, December 7. |
| 1941–1946 | Saturday night activities at Church for USO. Woman's Auxiliary sponsors entertainment and socials. |
| 1942 | United States enters World War II. |
| | Martha Enck, first full-time director of music. |
| | Katherine McChesney, first full-time director of religious education. |
| | Membership 1,210, contributions $50,316. |
| 1944 | Mr. William R. Sparrow, first president of Men's Fellowship Club. |
| 1948 | Church publishes *History of First Presbyterian Church* by Hugh A. Query. |
| | Four downtown churches establish a Christian Day School, originally meeting at the Methodist Church. Later each main-line church establishes its own program. This is probably the seed for Presbyterian Weekday School. |
| 1950 | Korean War. |
| 1950s | Nellie Warren Bible Class thrives. Many women contribute to church programs through participation in this class. |
| | Well-established mission at Piedmont Chapel grows with prominent leaders from First Church: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Moss, Mrs. Jerry Shive, Mr. Wade Williford, Mrs. John Wilkins, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gordon, Mr. John Parks. |
| 1952 | Dr. Harry M. Moffett accepts call as pastor. |
| 1954 | Radio ministry begins and continues until 2001. |
| 1955 | Fred A. Ratchford begins service as clerk of Session, serves long tenure totaling ten years. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1955 | Herald Class sponsors fundraising sale of quilt blocks. Each block sells for $0.25. Quilt is on display in Heritage Room. Quilt is then auctioned off. Herald and Nellie Warren Sunday school classes merge to become the Women's Bible Class. |
| | Wednesday Evening Prayer Service becomes Downtown Noon Prayer Service. |
| | Church acquires 10.95 acres for $32,580 from Ratchford heirs. |
| 1957 | Congregation votes to relocate physical plant to Kendrick Road (now Garrison Boulevard). |
| | Church acquires two adjoining smaller parcels of land from Owens family. |
| | Vanguard Bible Class changes its name to Eunice Warren Bible Class in honor of Mrs. W. Y. Warren. Her photograph is on display in Heritage Room. |
| 1959 | Mrs. J. H. Matthews gifts White Chapel Handbells. |
| | Elders adopt Rotary System. |
| 1960 | Mrs. Dane S. Rhyne resigns as church hostess after thirty years. |
| | Church holds groundbreaking for new structure, April 10. |
| 1961 | Vietnam War. |
| | Church publishes *The First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, NC: A History* by Charles F. Daniel, a sequel to the Query history. |
| | Church moves to Garrison Boulevard. Congregation holds services in fellowship hall until sanctuary is completed. |
| | Congregation honors Mr. Harry Rutter for serving as elder for fifty years. |
| 1962 | Presbyterian Weekday School established; Ellen F. Bowen first director. |
| | First wedding in new sanctuary: Jennie Winget and Gene Williams. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1964 | Congregation holds first Maundy Thursday service. |
| 1968 | Dr. James G. Stuart accepts call as pastor. |
| | Mrs. J. C. Taylor (Nonie) begins use of Dewey decimal system for church library. |
| 1969 | Margaret Summerell, first woman elder. |
| 1970 | Mr. Dan C. Howe, first financial secretary. |
| 1970s | Pastor's Aide Program flourishes. Mrs. Ralph Falls (Tommye) chairs. |
| | Leon Alexander, Craig Watson steer major fund-raising campaign for church capital improvements. |
| 1971 | Congregation begins Ritual of Friendship. |
| 1972 | Mothers' Morning Out begins. |
| 1973 | Church installs carillon. Meals on Wheels organizes at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Presbyterians participate. |
| 1974 | First Christmas Eve candlelight service held in sanctuary. |
| | Student Loan Fund established by anonymous donor, apart from scholarship opportunities. |
| 1975 | Dr. Peter Carruthers gives first children's sermon. |
| | Sunday 9:00 A.M. service starts for summer months. |
| 1976 | First pictorial directory. |
| 1977 | Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET) is established. |
| 1980 | Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Robinson donate home on New Hope Road to church. Proceeds from sale added to Presbyterian Endowment Trust. |
| 1980s | Five downtown churches hold first Thanksgiving-eve service. |
| 1981 | Session directs purchase of first church van. |
| | Through sealed bids, congregation purchases pews from Piedmont Chapel, formerly pews in the Marietta Street Church. Two are in Heritage Room. |
| 1982 | Covenant Village opens. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1982 | Women of the Church publish *One Hundred Years of Cooking.* |
| 1984 | Session establishes permanent Personnel Committee. |
| | Church office installs first computer, gift of Parkdale Mills. |
| | Heritage Campaign funds capital improvements. |
| | Membership 1,666, contributions $536,181. |
| 1985 | Missions program initiates Two-Cents-a-Meal monthly offering. |
| | First Lay Renewal weekend. |
| | Presbyterians join Holy Trinity Lutheran Church to sponsor Vietnamese refugee family. |
| 1986 | Mr. and Mrs. David W. Royster Jr. donate Greyhound bus. |
| 1987 | Susie and George W. Ragan Spiritual Enrichment Fund is established to sponsor noted speakers for spiritual enrichment weekends. |
| 1988 | Session approves study of columbarium. |
| | Stuff 'n' Study begins on Wednesday nights. |
| | Monthly communion services begin at 9:00 A.M. |
| 1990 | Dr. John DeBevoise accepts call as pastor. |
| | Home Mission program builds first Habitat for Humanity House, "House of Faith." |
| | Church Session authorizes publication of first annual report, which is given to congregation. This report includes year's work of all committees. Copy available in Heritage Room. |
| | Caroline Gourly, Presbytery Executive, notes that First Presbyterian Church pays 10 percent of Presbytery budget. |
| | Christmas Eve 11:00 P.M. communion service begins. |
| 1991 | DCE Allison Lineberger implements afterschool program. |
| | Guidelines for officers prohibit Session and Diaconate nepotism. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1991 | Barium Springs Board of Regents confers title of regent emeritus on Mr. Bynum Carter. |
| 1992 | Task Force on Older Adults. |
| | Session confers pastor emeritus title on Dr. James G. Stuart. |
| | Session discusses Presbytery request for development of new church in southeast Gastonia (which became Southminster Presbyterian). Session endorses study. |
| 1993 | Session rejects Family Life Center concept. |
| 1994 | Super Cupboard opens on regular weekday basis. |
| | Second Habitat House opens. |
| | Dr. John Leith is scholar in residence for two months, financed by Ragan Spiritual Enrichment Funds. |
| | Session endorses aiding Third Street Presbyterian Church when city renovation relocates church to North Highland Street. PET contributes $300,000 to construction of new church. |
| 1995 | Presbytery opens local counseling program, Samaritan Counseling Center, now located in Cherryville. |
| | Administration sponsors fourteen-week course for officer training. |
| | Total congregation contributions pass $1 million mark. |
| | Session approves establishing Stephen Ministry program. |
| | Record attendance on Easter Sunday. |
| | Presbyterian Women publish *Dinner Chimes.* |
| | Church hosts "100 Men Who Cook" fellowship, programs, and dinners by Third Street Presbyterian. These events meet in the fellowship hall. |
| | Presbyterian Women receive honor-roll certificate for their Blanket the World contributions. |
| 1996 | WSOC-TV awards Nine Who Care plaque for Super Cupboard. |
| | Dr. David Stoker accepts call as pastor. |

1997 Dr. Stoker arrives in Gastonia. First sermon, March 12.

Church provides monetary aid to First Presbyterian Church, Grand Forks, North Dakota, for flood relief. Church provides new paraments for First Presbyterian Church in Greenville, North Carolina, for those lost due to Hurricane Fran.

Outside consultant presents long-range plan for church.

Building and Grounds Committee orders new chapel sound system and new cushions for sanctuary and chapel pews.

Session employs Pat Morrow as temporary business administrator/consultant.

Session approves Vision 2000 study.

Session honors Dorothy McKenzie for her twenty years as director of Presbyterian Weekday School.

Elders work with existing committees and senior minister for implementation of new Session model. Report and schedules are published in *Newsline.*

Suggested committee structure reduces standing committees significantly.

1998 Church accepts Salvation Army Good Neighbor Award.

PET has received a total of $1.1 million from the Carroll Harmon estate.

Session employs two youth directors.

Nursery renovation is completed. New computer system is installed. Funds are appropriated for organ renovation and paving parking lot.

Received approximately $1,267,658 from Frank Davis estate.

Dr. Wilson Rhoton becomes interim associate minister.

Session approves purchasing a twenty-one-passenger bus for $58,000.

1999 Building and Grounds Committee installs new sanctuary dimmer system.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1999 | Session adopts new format for Nominating Committee: two from Session, one from Diaconate, four from Congregation. |
| | Linda Dixon retires as church secretary. |
| | Session employs Pat Morrow as permanent church administrator. |
| 2000 | Carillon tower is renovated to accommodate care of bells. |
| 2001 | Terrorists attack United States, September 11. |
| | Rev. John Pruitt and Rev. Patrick Perryman conduct prayer services in sanctuary immediately after terrorist attacks. |
| | Session joins Confessing Church Movement. (Withdraws in 2005.) |
| 2002 | Membership 1,482, approved budget $1.37 million. |
| | Memorial gifts honoring J. Caswell Taylor (died February 2002) renovate Church Library. |
| | Session approves Joy in the Morning service at 8:45 A.M.; time later changed to 9:00 A.M. Church adds fellowship time with refreshments preceding 11:00 A.M. service. |
| | Session approves establishment of Committee of History and Archives as subcommittee of Building and Grounds committee. |
| | Marion Ellis engaged as author of First Presbyterian Church history. |
| | Session approves former audiovisual room as Heritage Room. |
| 2003 | Membership 1,482, approved budget $1.463 million. |
| | Session contracts with catering service for Wednesday Prayer Lunch and evening meals. |
| 2004 | Fourth Habitat House is dedicated in August. |
| | Session approves participation in Interfaith Hospitality Network. |
| 2004 | Membership 1,315, approved budget $1,562 million. |
| 2005 | Dr. Stoker announces his intention to Session to seek another call. |

*Members of First Presbyterian Who Have Become Ministers*

David M. Cameron
Mary Faith Carson
Julie McM. Cline
Ernest W. Davis
William G. Forrest
Graham Fowler
Gary M. Fulton
Rachel Henderlite
Joanne R. Hull
R. Manfred Johnston IV
Frank McG. Kincaid
David R. Lytle
J. Houston Matthews III
Neely D. McCarter
Frank McLaughen
Augustus A. McLean
William (Bill) Owens
Pamela M. Patrick (Cole)
Peggy K. Patrick (Turner)
Peggy Melissa Patrick (Hauser)
Robert W. Ratchford
E. R. Rinehart
Clyde O. Robinson Jr.
B. O. Shannon
H. W. Shannon
George Sinclair
Robert James (Bobby Jim) Wilkins
Tommy Lee Wilson Jr.

*Presbyterian Church Members Who Have Received the Silver Beaver Award of the Boy Scouts of America*

M. T. Cameron
J. Bynum Carter
Wesley A. Daniel
Ralph Dickson Sr.
Martha D. Eddins
W. B. Garrison
Joseph E. Gettys
W. Alex Hall
W. Duke Kimbrell
D. R. LaFar Jr.
Dan S. LaFar Sr.
David R. LaFar III
James H. McKenzie
James C. Poag Jr.
Gordon Quarles Jr.
Fred L. Smyre

*Clerks of the Session*

| | |
|---|---|
| Capt. J. Q. Holland | 1885–1893 |
| B. G. Bradley | 1893–1897 |
| Capt. J. Q. Holland | 1897–1911 |
| J. A. Hunter | 1911–1929 |
| John O. Rankin | 1929–1931 |
| Sam A. Robinson | 1931–1942 |
| B. T. Dickson | 1942–1946 |
| Robert A. Gordon | 1946–1947 |
| Hugh A. Query | 1948–1952 |
| James G. Jackson | 1952–1955 |
| Fred A. Ratchford | 1955–1962, 1969–1972, 1975 |
| M. T. Cameron | 1963–1964 |
| John C. Mason Jr. | 1965–1968 |
| Ralph S. Robinson Jr. | 1973–1974, 1976–1978 |
| Minor R. Adams Jr. | 1979–1981 |
| James B. Garland Jr. | 1982–1984 |
| Fred L. Smyre | 1985–1986 |
| Emily G. Simpson | 1987–1988, 1995–1996, 1999–2001 |
| Robert E. Sumner III | 1989 |
| William L. Craig Jr. | 1990 |
| Sarah A. Abernethy | 1991–1992 |
| Philip R. Williams | 1993 |
| Douglas L. Stover | 1994 |
| John W. Calhoun | 1997–1998 |
| Barbara H. Voorhees | 2002 |
| Susan T. McCurry | 2003 |
| W. Gordon Quarles Jr. | 2004–2005 |

*Associate Ministers of First Presbyterian Church*

| | |
|---|---|
| George R. Gillespie | 1918–1924 |
| Joe Overmyer | 1926–1934 |
| C. G. McKnight | 1931–1937 |
| Irving M. Ellis | 1937–1940 |
| Linwood Cheshire | 1944–1946 |
| J. N. Brown | 1954–1966 |
| John Kimbirl | 1966–1970 |
| Ralph Bright | 1970–1973 |
| Peter C. (Pete) Carruthers | 1974–1978 |
| Stephen W. Caddell | 1978–1984 |
| Frank Mayes | 1980–1989 |
| Keith Uffman | 1986–1989 |
| Ronald J. Gilreath | 1991–1999 |
| Robert Messick-Watkins | 1992–1997 |
| Gary Fulton | 1996–1997 |
| John C. Pruitt | 1999–2002 |
| Patrick H. Perryman | 2000– |

*Directors of Religious/Christian Education*

| | |
|---|---|
| Irving M. Ellis, DRE | 1938–1940 |
| Helen Hubbard, DRE | 1940–1942 |
| Katherine McChesney (Mackie), DRE | 1942–1945 |
| Mary Olive Walker (McChesney), DRE | 1945–1951 |
| Eubank Taylor, DCE | 1953–1968 |
| Gayla Sandel Woody, DCE | 1975–1980 |
| Ernie Davis, DCE | 1980–1986 |
| Allison Gordon (Lineberger), DCE | 1985–1998 |

YOUTH

| | |
|---|---|
| Ernie Davis | 1980–1986 |
| Reverend Keith Uffman | 1986–1989 |
| Jim McAlhaney | 1990–1992 |
| Reverend Rob Messick-Watkins | 1992–1997 |
| Luke Langston | 1998–2001 |
| Sarah Chamberlain | 1998–2000 |
| Pratt Butler | 2002– |
| Courtney Butler | 2004– |

CHILDREN

| | |
|---|---|
| Allison Gordon (Lineberger) | 1986–1998 |
| Laura Parsons | 2000– |

ADULT

| | |
|---|---|
| Reverend Ron Gilreath | 1991–1999 |
| Reverend John Pruitt | 1999–2002 |
| Reverend Patrick Perryman | 2000– |

*Directors of Music*

| | |
|---|---|
| Edgar Love | 1926 |
| Joe Overmyer | 1926–1934 |
| C. G. McKnight | 1931–1937 |
| Irving M. Ellis | 1937–1940 |
| Helen Hubbard (Kemp) | 1940–1942 |
| Martha Enck (Loftin) | 1942–1943 |
| Emma Binns (Bercaw) | 1943–1945 |
| Roy Wheeler | 1945–1948 |
| Mrs. E. M. Dozier | 1949–1950 |
| Mildred Romer | 1950–1951 |
| Herf Applewhite | 1953–1955 |
| Edith Warren | 1955–1969 |
| John Hebblethwaite | 1970–1976 |
| Hughes Huffman | 1976–1979 |
| Janet Graham | 1980–1984 |
| Marcia Sommers (Mau) | 1985–1993 |
| Jeff Weiss | 1994–1998 |
| Mary F. McFarland | 1998– |

*Presidents of the Presbyterian Women's Organizations*

The original Women's Group began in 1884 and was called Ladies' Aide Society. The first president was Mrs. A. M. Smyre. In 1887, the name was changed to Ladies' Home and Foreign Missionary Society. During the time this name was in use (1884–1896), the following women served as presidents: Mrs. McCormick, Mrs. R. C. G. Love, Mrs. McIwaine, Mrs. R. N. Wilson, Mrs. Alexander, Mrs. J. F. Love, and Mrs. D. E. McConnell. In 1905, Ladies' Missionary Society president was Mrs. Lela Shuford Reid.

Women of the Church began in 1920. In 1989–1990, the organization was renamed Presbyterian Women. The following ladies have served as presidents:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mrs. S. A. Kindley | 1920 |
| *Mrs. G. W. Ragan | 1921–1922 |
| *Mrs. W. Y. Warren | 1923–1924 |
| *Miss Mary Ragan | 1925–1926 |
| *Mrs. P. R. Falls | 1927 |
| *Mrs. Norman Morrow | 1928–1929 |
| *Mrs. Harry Rutter | 1930–1931 |
| *Mrs. J. L. Kendrick | 1932–1933 |
| *Mrs. C. I. Loftin | 1934–1935 |
| *Mrs. W. F. Michael | 1936–1937 |
| *Mrs. L. N. Patrick | 1938–1939 |
| *Mrs. S. E. Morrison | 1940–1941 |
| *Mrs. Caldwell Ragan | 1942–1943 |
| *Mrs. Vivian Rankin | 1944–1945 |
| *Mrs. Von W. Hollinger | 1946–1947 |
| *Mrs. W. L. Wilson | 1948–1949 |
| *Mrs. O. Douglas Boyce | 1950–1951 |
| *Mrs. Hugh A. Query | 1952–1953 |
| *Mrs. J. N. Summerell | 1954–1955 |
| *Mrs. T. L. Wilson | 1956–1957 |
| Mrs. W. H. Jarman | 1958–1959 |

*Presidents of the Presbyterian Women's Organizations (continued)*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mrs. E. L. Patterson | 1960–1961 |
| *Mrs. W. L. Wetzell Jr. | 1961–1962 |
| *Mrs. Branson Zeigler | 1963–1964 |
| *Mrs. O. Douglas Boyce | 1964–1965 |
| *Mrs. James B. Garland | 1965–1966 |
| Mrs. Verne Shive | 1967–1968 |
| Mrs. Roy Kelly | 1968–1969 |
| *Mrs. Fred Lytle | 1969–1971 |
| Mrs. Neale Patrick | 1971–1972 |
| Mrs. Ben Drake | 1972–1973 |
| Mrs. H. S. Mackie | 1973–1974 |
| *Mrs. George W. Ragan | 1974–1975 |
| *Mrs. C. Jeff McArver | 1975–1976 |
| Mrs. George Miller | 1976–1977 |
| Mrs. John Peden | 1977–1978 |
| Mrs. Banks Bolin | 1978–1979 |
| Mrs. William H. Keith | 1979–1980 |
| Mrs. David H. Simpson | 1980–1981 |
| *Mrs. Glendall King | 1981–1982 |
| Mrs. W. Danford Wilson | 1983–1984 |
| Mrs. Ben W. Knauss | 1984–1985 |
| Mrs. J. Ben Morrow | 1985–1986 |
| Mrs. P. W. Aycock Jr. | 1986–1987 |
| Mrs. Garland Atkins | 1987–1988 |
| Mrs. D. Pat Craig | 1988–1990 |
| Mrs. Donald Barringer | 1990–1991 |
| Mrs. Algie Wilson | 1991–1992 |
| Mrs. C. Ellis Fisher | 1992–1993 |
| Mrs. Charles Wetzell | 1993–1994 |
| Mrs. Tom D. Efird | 1994–1995 |
| Mrs. M. Lance Brenner | 1995–1996 |
| Mrs. R. William Kelly | 1996–1997 |
| Mrs. William P. Adams | 1997–1998 |
| Mrs. Franklin Molen | 1998–1999 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mrs. William Pritchett | 1999–2000 |
| Mrs. Robert Sumner | 2000–2001 |
| Mrs. David Ratchford | 2001–2002 |
| Mrs. C. Daniel Page | 2002–2003 |
| Mrs. Steven Williams | 2003–2004 |
| Mrs. Jeffrey Owens | 2004–2005 |

**Deceased*

## *Honorary Life Memberships*

Honorary Life Membership in the Presbyterian Women organization is conferred upon an individual in recognition of faithful service in some area of the church's work.

No awards were given 1981–1989.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mrs. J. H. Henderlite | 1945 |
| *Mrs. C. I. Loftin | 1945 |
| *Mrs. G. W. Ragan | 1946 |
| *Mrs. S. A. Kindley | 1947 |
| *Mrs. Von Hollinger | 1948 |
| *Mrs. Harry Rutter | 1949 |
| *Mrs. W. F. Michael | 1950 |
| *Mrs. D. E. McConnell | 1950 |
| *Miss Bess Jackson | 1951 |
| *Mrs. V. G. Grier | 1952 |
| *Mrs. P. R. Falls | 1953 |
| *Mrs. G. V. Patterson | 1953 |
| *Mrs. J. F. Thompson | 1953 |
| *Mrs. L. N. Patrick | 1954 |
| *Mrs. J. L. Kendrick | 1954 |
| *Mrs. W. G. Rhyne | 1955 |

*Honorary Life Memberships (continued)*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mrs. W. Y. Warren | 1955 |
| *Mrs. Norman Morrow | 1955 |
| *Mrs. R. A. Gordon | 1956 |
| *Mrs. W. L. Wilson | 1956 |
| *Miss Mildred Lineberger | 1957 |
| *Mrs. S. A. Robinson | 1957 |
| *Mrs. Vivian Rankin | 1958 |
| *Mrs. J. G. Jackson | 1958 |
| *Mrs. S. J. Hood | 1959 |
| *Mrs. R. C. McLean | 1959 |
| *Mrs. Harry Cobb | 1960 |
| *Mrs. J. H. Matthews | 1960 |
| *Mrs. Hugh Query | 1961 |
| *Mrs. J. N. Summerell | 1961 |
| *Mrs. T. L. Wilson | 1962 |
| *Mrs. E. L. Patterson | 1962 |
| *Miss Georgia Copeland | 1963 |
| *Mrs. T. J. Abernathy | 1963 |
| *Mrs. John A. Wilkins | 1964 |
| *Miss Ola Margaret Moton | 1964 |
| *Mrs. R. O. Crawford | 1965 |
| *Mrs. Fred Spurrier | 1965 |
| Mrs. James F. Ormand | 1966 |
| *Mrs. A. L. Sudduth | 1966 |
| *Mrs. Ralph H. Falls | 1967 |
| *Mrs. Fred M. Moss | 1967 |
| *Mrs. Mary R. Carpenter | 1967 |
| *Mrs. I. W. Spake | 1968 |
| *Mrs. Dane S. Rhyne | 1968 |
| *Mrs. Ed Adams | 1969 |
| *Mrs. O. Douglas Boyce | 1969 |
| *Mrs. J. Sid Winget | 1969 |
| *Mrs. James L. Taylor | 1970 |
| *Mrs. Walter Kluttz | 1970 |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mrs. Charles Thompson | 1971 |
| *Mrs. C. C. Kimbrell | 1971 |
| *Mrs. D. R. LaFar Jr. | 1971 |
| *Mrs. W. L. Wetzell Jr. | 1972 |
| Mrs. W. H. Jarman | 1972 |
| *Mrs. J. L. Hart | 1973 |
| Mrs. George Miller | 1973 |
| *Mrs. J. L. Barnett | 1974 |
| Mrs. H. S. Mackie | 1974 |
| *Mrs. W. J. Carroll | 1975 |
| *Mrs. Jerry Shive | 1975 |
| *Mrs. Leonora Taylor | 1975 |
| *Mrs. W. B. Garrison | 1976 |
| *Mrs. Graydon Horne | 1976 |
| *Mrs. Ralph Robinson Sr. | 1976 |
| Mrs. Benjamin Drake | 1977 |
| *Mrs. Caldwell Ragan | 1977 |
| *Mrs. George Ragan | 1977 |
| *Mrs. Margaret Beam | 1978 |
| *Mrs. Amos C. Johnstone | 1978 |
| Mrs. John C. Peden | 1978 |
| *Mrs. F. Irvin Hull | 1979 |
| *Mrs. D. P. Ragan | 1979 |
| *Mrs. T. Craig Watson | 1979 |
| *Mrs. Ralph Kendrick | 1980 |
| *Mrs. Minor R. Adams | 1980 |
| *Mrs. Sam M. Stewart | 1980 |
| *Miss Justus Cathey | 1981 |
| *Mrs. W. R. Sparrow | 1981 |
| *Mrs. Jeff McArver | 1981 |
| *Miss Jennie Craig Watson | 1989 |
| *Miss Mary John Howe | 1989 |
| Mrs. L. Neale Patrick | 1990 |
| *Mrs. Glendall King | 1990 |

*Honorary Life Memberships (continued)*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Mrs. James Boyce Garland | 1991 |
| Mrs. M. T. Cameron | 1991 |
| Mrs. Henry Cabaniss | 1992 |
| Mrs. D. Pat Craig | 1992 |
| Mrs. William H. Keith | 1993 |
| *Mrs. William C. Ratchford | 1993 |
| *Mrs. George M. Wood | 1993 |
| Mrs. Banks E. Bolin | 1994 |
| Mrs. W. J. McConnaughey | 1994 |
| *Mrs. John D. McLean | 1994 |
| *Mrs. Blake Breitenhirt | 1995 |
| Mrs. Philip R. Williams | 1995 |
| Mrs. W. Danford Wilson | 1995 |
| Mrs. Robert A. Blake | 1996 |
| Miss Jean Marie Torrence | 1996 |
| *Mrs. Branson E. Zeigler | 1996 |
| Mrs. Tom D. Efird | 1997 |
| Mrs. G. Edward Lewis | 1997 |
| Mrs. David H. Simpson | 1997 |
| Mrs. W. B. Abernethy | 1998 |
| Mrs. M. Lance Brenner | 1998 |
| Mrs. Robert P. Barringer | 1999 |
| Mrs. Tom Cory | 1999 |
| Mrs. William H. Kelly | 2000 |
| Mrs. Harry W. Kiser | 2001 |
| Mrs. Roy Kelly | 2002 |
| Mrs. Ned Marvin | 2002 |
| Miss Ruth Rice | 2002 |
| Mrs. W. W. Dickson | 2003 |
| Mrs. James McKenzie | 2003 |
| Mrs. Franklin Molen | 2003 |
| Mrs. Roy P. Warren | 2004 |
| Mrs. Latane H. Ware | 2004 |

**Deceased*

*First Presbyterian Church War Veterans*

This list of veterans reflects those who were members of First Presbyterian Church at the time of their service to our country. The Committee of History and Archives regrets any omissions or errors.

Robert S. Abernathy
T. J. Abernathy
Thomas J. Abernathy Jr.
William E. Abernathy
Charles W. Adams
David S. Adams
Lacy E. Adams
Robert L. Adams Jr.
Simeon Huey Adams
Arthur A. Armstrong Jr.
J. Raleigh Armstrong
James C. Axon
William D. Belton
William D. Belton Jr.
Wylie W. Bindeman Jr.
Charles K. Boren
Frank Boyd
Isabel M. Bradford
C. D. Bradley
Chileon Bradley
Harry Bradley
William Bradley
John E. Brison Jr.
Thomas M. Brockman Jr.
Clifford T. Bull
J. Ralph Bull Jr.
Harold A. Bustle
Walter J. Carroll
Audrey Clemmer
Dr. R. S. Clinton
Harry Cobb
Paul D. Combs
Edwin Costner
George Robert Currence
John L. Currence
Robert Brandon Currence
Leonard Curry
William M. Davidson
Donald H. Davis
Brice T. Dickson Jr.
Tommie F. Dickson
Walter W. Dickson
A. Wilson Dunn Jr.
Paul L. Erlewein
George Worth Falls
John Rankin Falls
Rebecca Falls
J. Hay Fant
Alfred Ferguson
Alvin L. Ferguson
Charles M. Ferguson Jr.
John Anderson Ferguson
Mervyn L. Filipponi
James H. Findlay
William H. Ford
A. Kenneth Froneberger
Warren Y. Gardner Jr.
James Boyce Garland

*First Presbyterian Church War Veterans (continued)*

Peter Woods Garland Jr.
David E. Gillespie
John David Glenn
Robert Ray Glenn
Robert A. Grier
Roger M. Grier
Thomas G. Grier
V. G. Grier
Charles L. Grigg
William G. Grigg
Wiley (Ted) Harrison
Charles B. Hawkins
William Lewis Hawkins
James H. Henderlite Jr.
Richard H. Henderson
James W. Holland
Ruth M. Hood
William B. Hood
Dan Charlton Howe
James Lamar Howe
Wayne Howe
Cooper A. Huffstetler
Lawrence N. Huffstetler
Clyde Humphrey
James L. Humphrey
Dr. W. B. Hunter
J. A. Hunter Jr.
James Robert Hunter
John Hunter
Herbert C. Jackson
John Alfred Jackson
Richard R. Jarman
Manfred Johnston
A. C. Jones Jr.
David Andrew Jones
James Latimer Jones
Laurence G. Jones
Robert Y. Kelly
Roy W. Kelly
Alfred Kendrick
J. Ralph Kendrick Jr.
Martha L. Kendrick
Curtis C. Kimbrell Jr.
W. Duke Kimbrell
Paul P. Kincaid Jr.
Robert Kincaid
S. A. Kindley
Allen G. King Jr.
W. D. Lawson Jr.
W. D. Lawson III
T. E. Leavitt
Joseph S. Leeper
Ned Leeper
H. Price Lineberger Jr.
John Frank Loftin
Samuel D. Love
William T. Love Jr.
Harold E. Martin
John C. Mason III
Eugene Mason
Eugene R. Matthews
J. Houston Matthews Jr.
J. Houston Matthews III
Donald McCarter
Edward T. McConnell
Samuel McKay Jr.
James Frank McKee
William F. McKee

Robert E. McLean Jr.
James E. McNair Jr.
David A. McQueen
Joseph Melton
Spencer Michael
Dossie K. Miller
Jasper Miller Jr.
Mary W. Miller
Gene H. Minges
W. T. Minges Jr.
J. Stoney Moore
Steve Morris
Teresa Morris
J. Holland Morrow
Shannon W. Murphy Jr.
Will Nolen
Steve Owens
Stanley Pack
Edward M. Parrott
L. Neale Patrick Jr.
Ralph G. Patrick Jr.
William Henry Patrick Jr.
William M. Patrick
Arthur W. Patsch
John C. Peden
Kell Pettus
Britton Pressley Jr.
Willis Price
Samuel Putnam
D. P. Ragan Jr.
Daniel C. Ragan
Chester Rankin
Henry M. Rankin
James Thomas Rankin
John O. Rankin Jr.
John O. Rankin III
Joseph T. Rankin
Robert Wray Rankin
Samuel A. Rankin
W. T. Rankin
Robert E. Ratchford
Thomas A. Ratchford
Dr. Ralph Ray
Dane Samuel Rhyne Jr.
Fred Rhyne
Julius R. Rhyne
Malcolm S. Rhyne
Otto Rhyne
Fred D. Riddle
Clarence E. Roberts Jr.
William S. Roberts Jr.
Amos Quentin Robinson
Charles Mebane Robinson
Charles Mebane Robinson Jr.
Elbridge C. Robinson
J. Lee Robinson
Loyd Robinson
S. A. Robinson Jr.
Theodore L. Shelton
Daniel R. Shields Jr.
Lowell A. Shive
Verne E. Shive
William A. Sifford
Fred L. Smyre Jr.
Fred L. (Rick) Smyre III
L. Lewis Sowell
Arthur M. Spencer Jr.
Fred W. Spurrier Jr.

Powell H. Spurrier
Blake Boyd (Billy) Starnes
John Franklin Starnes
Thomas A. Stewart
Roger A. Stowe
Samuel O. Strange
Alvin L. Sudduth Jr.
William T. Talley
Robah S. Tate
J. Caswell Taylor
James L. Taylor
Hunter Elmore Thomas
Richard Earle Thomas
Thomas F. Thompson
J. W. Timberlake Jr.
R. L. Todd
Laura May Tomlin
William H. Tomlin
Charlton K. Torrence Sr.
Charlton K. Torrence Jr.
Clarence E. Underwood
Albert Van Sleen
Henry M. Van Sleen Jr.
Robert Van Sleen
Frank L. Virgin
Archie Wakefield Jr.
Ernest R. Warren
Roy Warren
William Y. Warren Jr.
Charles A. Wetzell
Lee M. Wetzell
Edith K. Whisnant
Hugh Edward White
Joseph Raymond Whitesides
Joseph Roy Whitesides
John A. Wilkins Jr.
Jack A. Willcox Jr.
Wade Hampton Williford
Clyde A. Wilson
Thomas Lee Wilson
William Danford Wilson
Earle Caldwell Workman
Thomas Reese Workman
Charles E. Zeigler

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Edgar F. Clemmer
F. Kelly Clemmer
Henry A. Clemmer
P. D. Clemmer
William B. Clemmer
Robert Craig
William Humphrey Jr.
William H. Jarman
Leland Morris
James Sisk

MEMBER PRESENTLY IN SERVICE

Norman P. Morrow Jr.

## *In Memoriam*

WORLD WAR I

Charles W. Adams
Will Nolen

WORLD WAR II

Alfred Kendrick
John Frank Loftin
Harold Martin
Eugene Matthews
John O. Rankin III
Thomas A. Ratchford
Fred W. Spurrier Jr.
Frank Starnes

## *Marketing Committee for* A Christian Witness: History of the First Presbyterian Church

Joan H. Barringer
Emily S. Bowyer
Tyler S. Bullock
Maribeth L. Jenkins
Kyle Key
Lisbet Nielsen
Christine C. Pierce
Judith A. Planer, chair
Tracy R. Roberts
Knox Winget

*Session Roster 2005*

Sarah Abernethy
Martha Beal
Marian Call
Hu Craig
Charles Gallman
Amy Holman
Annabelle Kelly
Frank Matthews
Gordon Quarles, clerk
Knox Winget

*Deacon Roster 2005*

Becky Adams
Ben Beasley, chair
Emmie Bowyer
Luke Ellington
Barbara Hammerle
Tom Kirkham
Janet Spencer
Robert Spencer
Mary Sumner
Steven Wilson

# *Index*

Note: Page numbers of illustrations are in *italics.*


Abbenes, Arie, 177
Abernethy, Sarah Adams, *41, 59,* 120, 123, 135, *144*
Abernethy, William B., Jr., *59,* 135, PLATE 4
*Adam and Eve,* 103
Adams, Bill, *146*
Adams, Dr. Charles E., 6, 18, 19
Adams, Dr. Robert H., 5, 20
Adams, Dr. Simeon H., 18
Adams, Emily, 6
Adams, Esther, 53
Adams, Jean Kelly, 123, 133
Adams, Lizzie, 110, *147*
Adams, M. R., 57, 62–63
Adams, Mrs. C. E., 172
Adams, Mrs. Ed, 25
Adams, Mrs. M. J., 5
Adams, Mrs. M. R., *68*
Adams, Mrs. R. L., Sr., 25
Adams, Rebecca, 126–27, *145*
Adams, Robert L., Jr., 18, 25
Adams family, 6, 22
Adams Memorial Church, 44, 110
Afterschool Program, *164*
Airline Avenue, 9
Akers, Elizabeth, *154*
Akers, John M., 41–42, 57, 62, 97, 100–102, 177
Akers, Reverend Dr. W. W., 41–42
Akers family, 22
Albright, Jane, *154*
Aldrich, Reverend Dr. Doug, 22, 106, *173*
Alexander, I. N., *14*
Alexander, Leon G., 57, 62, 63, 115
Alexander family, 6
Allen, Susan, *161*
Allf, Anna, PLATE 7
Allf, Brian, *140*
Allf, Jeanne, PLATE 7
Allison, Turner, PLATE 6
*Amahl and the Night Visitors,* 103–4
Anderson, April, *152*
Anderson, Emma, 98
Anderson, Reverend and Mrs. Vernon S., 111
Anderson, Reverend Robert Campbell, *13,* 14–15, 23, 28
Andrews, Mickie, *156,* 157
Anthony, Katherine, *41*
Apostles' Creed banner, *185*
Applewhite, Reverend Herff, 139–40, 168
Arkin, Alice Taylor, 18
Armstrong, C. B., 21
Armstrong, Elizabeth, 172–73
Armstrong, Ginny, *154*
Armstrong family, 6
Armstrong Memorial Presbyterian Church, 21, 26, 42
associate ministers, 206
Atkins, Garland, 103
Atlanta and Charlotte Airline Railroad, 10

Band of Hope, 110
baptisms, 33, 70, *179*
Barium Springs Orphanage, 108
Barnett, Helen Ragan, 151
Barnett, Joe L., 62, 151
Barnett family, 22
Barringer, Dr. Robert P., *127*
Barringer, Joan, 123
*Beacon* newsletter, 43
Beal, Giles, Jr., *58*
Beal, Helen, *152*
Beal, J. B., 11
Beal, Martha Barnett, 6, 18, *58, 144*
Beam, Margaret Rankin, 63, 98, 102
Beasley, Benjamin, *145*
Belgian Congo visit by Dr. Moffett, 73–78, *75, 77*
Belk, Georgia, PLATE 7
Belk, Timothy, 167, 173–74, *174*
Bell, A. Gilbert, 63
Bell, Annie, 5
Bell, Margaret, 5
Bell, R. H., 5
Bell, Sonora, 5
benevolences. *See* mission activities
Bennett, Cindy, *152*
Benson, Harriet, *152*
Bercaw, Emma Binns, 44
Berryman, Skip, *88*
Black, Elizabeth, PLATE 7
Blair, Bonnie, 56, 122
Blair, James, *144*
Blake, Dr. Bob, *112,* 112–13
*Blended Blessings* (by daughter of Rev. Smith), 12
Bone, Maddie, PLATE 7
Bonsac, Fay Spencer, 98
*Book of Church Order,* 15, 143
Bowen, Ellen Fain, 155–56
Boyce, Douglas, *41*
Boyce, Margaret, *41*
Boyce, S. N., 9
Boyce, Stella Holland, 9
Boy Scout activities
building at Marietta Street, 21, 28
seventy-fifth anniversary celebration, 149
Silver Beaver Award, 204
Troop 11, 27–28, 149–51, *150,* PLATE 6
Bradley, B. G., 5, 6, *19*
Bradley, Dorcas, 5
Bradley, Eliza, 5
Bradley, Joseph, 9
Bradley, William, 5
Bradley family, 6
Bradshaw, Beverly, *145,* PLATE 7
Breitenhirt, Thelma, 136
Brendle, Janet, *152*
Brenner, Cookie, 123
Bridgeman, John, *144*
Bright, Reverend Ralph, 88, 92
Brison, Patsy, *154*
Brittain, Steve, *144*
Bron, Reverend Jerry, 102
Brown, Marcia, 116
Brown, Reverend and Mrs. George, 74, 110
Brown, Reverend J. N., 53, *53*
Brown, Thomas, *145*
Brown, Virginia, 114–15, *115*
Browning, Ethan, PLATE 6
Broyhill, James, *93*
Bryant, Ann, *152*
Bryant, Anna, PLATE 7
Bryant, Jordan, PLATE 7
Bryant, Morgan, PLATE 7
Buckles, Mamie, PLATE 7
Buckles, Robert, *145*
budgets
1921, 29
1926, 29
1931, 35
1934, 35
1995, 129
1996, 135

Building and Grounds Committee, 4, 72
Building and Subscription Committee of 1895, 18–19
building projects
fundraising, 18–21, 57–60, 69
Garrison Boulevard church, 55–70, *65*
Long Street Church, 9
manse, 11–12
Marietta Street church, 11, 17–20
Bullock, Bailey, *156,* PLATE 7
Bullock, Dale, 90
Bullock, Mary Brown, 110
Bullock, Tyler Stuart, *89,* 90, PLATE 7
Burch, Melanie, *171*
Burleson, Betsy, *128*
Burr, Dr. David H., 104
Burrell, Betty, *171*
Burrell, Charlie, *171*
Burwell, Reverend Dr. H. W., 24
Butler, Baird, 123
Butler, Pratt, 162

C. C. Kimbrell Boy Scout Service Center, 149–51, *150*
Cabaniss, Dorothy, 105
Cabaniss, Henry, 105
Caddell, Reverend Stephen, 88
Caldwell, Cordelia Morrow, 95
Caldwell, R. E., 95
Call, James B., *106,* 115
Call, Marion, *144*
*A Call to Faith* (Rachel Henderlite), 36
Campbell, Dr. Ernest, 104
Campbell, Wanda, *171*
Camp Cherokee, 40
Camp Gallant, *55,* 108
Camp Golden Valley, 152
Camp Kiwanis, 152
Camp Rotary, 151–52
carillon. *See* Memorial Carillon
Carmichael, Don, 123
Carrie E. and Lena V. Glenn Foundation, 104
Carruthers, Reverend Pete, 88, *93,* 99–100, *100, 101,* 163
Carson, Dr. Mary Faith, 129
Carter, Becky, 123
Carter, Bynum, 63, 82, 102, *106,* 115
Carter, Shelly, *144*
Casavant Frères Limited organ, 68–69, 71–72, *168,* 175
Cashatt, James E., 63
Cathey, Justus, 102
Cathey, Louise, *113*
centennial celebration, 104–5, 116–17
Center, C. E. "Doc," 105
Chanticleer ensemble, 174
*Charlotte Observer,* 2, 5
Cherry, Blair, 51
Cherry, Gail, *41*
Cherry, Irene, *41, 147*
Cheshire, Reverend Linwood, 44
Chester and Lenoir Narrow Gauge Railroad, 10, 11
children's activities
Afterschool Program, *164*
Boy Scout activities, 21, 27–28, 149–51, *150,* PLATE 6
Children's Church/A Time for Young Disciples, 100, *101,* 157
Children's Ministry for Infants through Fifth Graders, 157–58
Children's Missionary Society, 109–10
Children's Music Ministries, 178–79
choirs, *41,* 168, *169,* 178, PLATE 16
Fall festival, 157
family activities, 94
Frank Davis Children's Fund, 102
Girl Scout activities, *60,* 151–54, *152, 154,* PLATE 7
Mothers' Morning Out, 157

children's activities (continued)
sports teams, *157, 158*
time capsule, 158
*See also* Christian education; youth ministry
*Children's Friend* newspaper, 4
"The Children's Missionary" pamphlet, 4
*Chimes* newsletter, 46
choirs. *See* music programs
Choquet, Will, *178,* PLATE 6
Christian Action Committee, 127
Christian education, 155–65, *159, 162, 164*
administration, 159
anonymous donors, 18
Communicants Classes, *88, 93, 178*
confirmation class, *175*
as congregational priority, 94
Connections Sunday school class, 159, *161*
Covenant Life Curriculum, 36
directors, 43–44, 52–53, 119, 155, 162–63, 207
Dr. Leith's lectures, 129
under Dr. Stoker, 143–45
under Dr. Stuart, 105
Eunice Warren Bible Class, 114
"Experiencing God" class, 145
Faith and Fiction book group, *128,* 129
Henderlite Bible Class, 36, 125, *142,* 159, *160*
integration issues, 155
Koinonia, 159
Ladies' Bible Class, 159, *161*
Presbyterian Weekday School, 116, 155–57, *156,* 157, PLATE 15
sacraments class, 158
Seekers Bible Class, *119,* 159
Stuff 'n' Study program, 105, 168
Sunday school, 145, 157–58
Sunday school building, 27
Sunday school superintendent, 155
Thursday breakfast and Bible study, 162–63, *163*
Vacation Bible School, *54, 156,* 157, 158–59
women in leadership roles, 108
*Christian Observer* newspaper, 5
Church World Service, 113
civil rights movement, 76, 81–85, 91–92
Clark, Katie, 44–45, *171,* 178
clerks of the Session, 205
Cleveland, Grover, 6
Cline, David, *106,* 123
Cobb, Harry S., 62–63, 105
Cockfield, Debbi, PLATE 7
Cole, Mary Ann, *154*
Collier, Jack, PLATE 6
Collier, James, PLATE 6
Collis, Emily, PLATE 7
Collis, Hailey, PLATE 7
columbarium, 88, 123, PLATE 12
Committee of Forty-four, 34
Committee of History and Archives, 1–2, 120
communion elements, *141*
Community Kindergarten, 113
Confederate army service, 18–19
Congolese Presbyterian Church, 73–74, 77–78
Congregational Care Ministry, *144*
Connections Sunday school class, 159, *161*
Cooperative Christian Ministry, 116
Copeland, Georgia, *55*
Corbett, Reverend W. B., *7,* 9
cornerstone time capsule of 1895, *2*
church role in 1895, 5–6
contents, 1–6
discovery, 1–4, *3,* 72, *176*
elders and deacons, 6
Ladies Missionary Society, 6
Costner, Frank A., 6, 18, *20*

Costner family, 6
Courter, John, 177
Covenant Life Curriculum, 36
Covenant Presbyterian Church, 57, 80
Covenant Village project, 88, 89, 94–99, *96, 99*
  Benevolent Fund, 95, 98
  ecumenical nature, 95
  fundraising, 95, 97–98
Crab Shrimp Casserole recipe, 118
Craig, J. H., 5
Craig, Mary, 5
Craig, Mrs. Thomas L., 28
Craig, Thomas L., 28
Craig, William Lewis, 137–38
Craig family, 6, 22
Crisis Assistance Ministry for Christians and Jews in Greater Gastonia, Inc., 44, *45,* 116, 126–27, 145
Crisp, Douglas, *106*
Crossnore School, 108
Culp, Ann, *154*
Culp, Betsy, *152*
Cunningham, Reverend Dr. John Rood, 51
Current, A. J., PLATE 6
Current, Elizabeth, 122, *146*
Current, Jack and Henry, *179*
Current, William A., 177
Curry, J. E., 6, *14, 20*

Dallas Park chapel, 21
Daniel, Charles F., 69–70
daughter churches, 21
Davidson College, 34, 125
Davis, Frank W., 102
Davis, John, 75–76
Davis, Mark, 137, 142
Dawsey, Dr. Ben, 79
deacons
  of 1895, 6
  of 1898, *20*
  of 2004, *145*
  of 2005, 220
  definition, 79
Deason, Elaine, *170,* 179–80
DeBevoise, Emalee, 117, 124
DeBevoise, Reverend Dr. Don T., 128
DeBevoise, Reverend Dr. John T., 121–34, *122*
  background, 124
  call to First Presbyterian, 124–25
  community involvement, 125–29, 133
  Faith and Fiction book group, *128,* 129
  Gaston County pastoral counseling center, 128–29
  Habitat for Humanity work, 130
  hymnal decisions, 180
  Joy Campaign, 129–30, 184–85
  Kirkin' of the Tartans service, 130–32, *131–32*
  leadership style, 129–30
  partner church in Guatemala, 129
  prayer luncheon for prisoners, 126
  prayer of dedication, 136
  resignation, 133–34
  sabbatical, 129
  Super Cupboard program, 126–27
  views on social issues, 128
  youth ministry, 125–26
de la Vega, Dr. Raul, 177
de la Vega, Jo Anne, *171,* 177, 178
de la Vega, Sarah, *178*
Dendy, S. Wilkes, 28
Dickson, Andrew, *178*
Dickson, Brice T., 62, 69, *100*
Dickson, Connie, *88*
Dickson, David, *160*
Dickson, Dr. W. W. "Dub," 79, 94, 122, *144*
Dickson, Michael, *160*
Dickson, Ralph, III, *88*

Dickson, Ralph, Sr., 57, 62–63, *68*, 81
Dickson, Tem, *154*
Dickson family, 6, 22
*Dinner Chimes*, 117
Director of Children's Music Ministries, 178–79
directors of Christian education, 43–44, 52–53, 119, 155, 162–63, 207
directors of music, 167–70, 178–79, 208
Dixon, Jean Groves, 151–52
Dixon, Linda, 105
Dole, Preston, PLATE 6
Downey, Ellen, *170*
Dozier, Sally, *41*
Drake, Louise, 113
drama programs, 100, 103–4, PLATE 5
Dunford, Phil, 110
Dunn, Wilson, 123
Dunn family, 22
Durham, John O., 45
Durham, Mrs. John O., 45
Durham, Reverend and Mrs. C. G., 74, 111

Eaker, Carolyn, *154*
Easter services, 162, PLATE 11–12
Ebner, Gail, *144*
Efird, Anne, 117, 133
Efird, Tim, *146*
Efird, Tom, 102, 133, 141–42, *142*
Efird family, 22
Eichelberger, Reverend Hugh, 123
Eijsbouts Foundry, 177
elders of 1895, 6
Ellis, Kay, *41*
Ellis, Lulawill, 42–43
Ellis, Marion, 2
Ellis, Reverend Irving M. "Deac," 39–46, *40*
  appointment to senior minister, 39
  assistant minister position, 40–41
  background, 39–40
  Christian education, 43–44, 119
  church controversy, 46
  death, 46
  Doctor of Divinity degree, 46
  First Church centennial celebration, 104
  Girl Scout activities, 151–52
  1948 message, 187–88
  mission work, 45
  musical skills and activities, 39–44
  Pontiac gift, 46
  resignation, 46
  sermon length, 41–42
  women in leadership roles, 108
  youth ministry, 40–41, 43
Elmore, Paulette, 157
endowments. *See* memorials and endowments
Etheridge, Jean, *41*
Eunice Warren Bible Class, *114*
Evans, Gary, PLATE 4
Eyler, Louise, *154*

Faine, John, PLATE 6
Faith and Fiction book group, *128*, 129
Falls, J. R., 9
Falls, John R., *79*
Falls, Ralph, Jr., *41*
Falls, Ralph H., 55, 57, 62
Falls, Rebecca, 151
Falls, Tommye, 53–54
Falls family, 22
Falls House Hotel, 9
Fanning, Anna, *145*
Farrot, Don, 51
Faust, Kay, *41*
Fayssoux, J. H., 5, 11, 17
Fayssoux, Jemima, 5
Ferguson, Ben, 123
Feuer, Debbie, *154*
Fielding, Craig, 94
Fink, Dwayne and Sarah, 103

First United Methodist Church, 57
Fisch, Clara, 111
Fisher, Dr. Ellis, 112, *140*
Fisher, Meg, 117
Fitzmaurice, Kate, *178*
Floyd, Chriscynethia, 174
Fogartie, Reverend Jim, 87
Ford, Ruby Neal, *41*
Forrest, Nina, *154*
Forrest, Rose, 117, *154*
Forrest, Terry, *88*
Foster, Gwen, PLATE 7
founding in 1882, 5
Frank Davis Children's Fund, 102
Franklin, Jimmy, *150*
Fulton, Gary, 122
Fulton, Reverend Dr. C. Darby, 73–78, *75*
future directions, 183–86

G. W. Ragan and Company store, 18–19
Gallant, Harry E., 21
Gallant, James, *14*
Gallant family, 6
Gallman, Charles, *144*
Gamp, Lewis "Brud," 59–60
Gardner, Sarah, 151
Garland, James B. "Jick," *130,* 149
Garland, Jo, *110*
Garland, Kathleen Boyce, 149
Garland, Peter W., 149
Garland family, 22
Garrett, Jay, *132*
Garrison, Mrs. W. B., 63
Garrison, W. B., 57, 62, *68,* 80
Garrison Boulevard church, *71,* PLATE 1
  architect Harold Wagoner, 57, 61–64, 67–71
  banners, *141, 185*
  baptismal font, 70
  building committees, 57, 62
  Casavant Frères Limited organ, 68–69, 71–72, *168,* 175
  chapel, *136*
  columbarium, 88, 123, PLATE 12
  communion elements, *141*
  construction, 55–70, *65, 68*
  controversy of move, 56
  cornerstone of 1895, 1–4, *3,* 72, *176*
  cornerstone of 1962, 72, 104–5
  cost of construction, 69
  dedication in 1966, 84
  design decisions, 60–64, 67–70
  Easter celebrations, PLATE 11–12
  fundraising, 57–60, 69, 81, 105, *106*
  Heritage Fund, 105, *106*
  Heritage Room, 12, 18, 21, 30, 69, 110, PLATE 3
  land purchase in 1955, 56
  Memorial Carillon, 4, 18, *66,* 72, 81, 175–78, *176*
  offices, 72, 142
  opening, 70–72
  renovations, 142, 177
  sanctuary cross, 67
  stained glass window, PLATE 11
  steeple, *80*
Garrison family, 22
Garrison General Hospital, 34
Gaston County Girl Scouts, 151
Gastonia, North Carolina
  annexation of Garrison Boulevard property, 64
  business district, circa 1920, *28*
  civil rights movement, 81–85, 91–92
  Community Kindergarten, 113
  Cooperative Christian Ministry, 116
  county government, 10
  downtown churches, 11, 81
  elected officials, 11, 17

Gastonia, North Carolina (continued)
1895 "elite," *14*
Human Relations Committee, 81–83
population, 2, 9–10
railroad, 10
strike of 1929, 82
textile industry, 4, 10–11, 17, 19–20, 26
Gastonia Academy, 9
"Gastonia Change," 177
*Gastonia Gazette,* 2, 5, 6, 30–34, 36
Gastonia Women's Betterment Association, 108
General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (PCUS), 105
Gettys, Joe, *88*
Gibbons, Anderson, PLATE 6
Gibbs, Wynn, *88*
Giles, Jimmy, *41*
Giles, Larry, *41*
Giles, Mack, *41*
Gillespie, Reverend Dr. George R., 26
Gillespie, Reverend Mr. E. E., 24
Gilreath, Reverend Ron, 135
Girl Scout activities, *60,* 151–54, PLATE 7
Brownies, 1963, *152*
camps, 151–52
Marguerite Ring Torrence Service Center, 152
Troop 74, 1953, *154*
Glenn, Betty Jean, *41*
Glenn, Dr. Enos Franklin, 6, *20,* 21
Glenn family, 6
Goff, Addy, PLATE 7
Gordon, Robert and Lucille, 43, *43,* 44
Gray, Bobby, *41*
Gray, George, 19–20
Gray, George, Sr., 45
Gray, Mrs. George, Sr., 45
Gray family, 6
Great Depression era, 34–35
Grissom, Charlie, *142, 171*
Groves Fund, 102
Gunn, Reverend George, 123
Gunter, Dan, 81

Habitat for Humanity, 130, 146, 159
Hall, Alex, *142*
Hall, Ginny, 117
Hall, Reverend Dr. Warner, 80
Hammerle, Barbara, *145*
Hamner, Betty, *152*
Hamner, Katherine, *154*
Harmon, Carroll, 102, 135
Harper, R. T., 6, *20*
Harris, Carlisle, PLATE 7
Harris, Glen, *88*
Harris, Lou Anne, *154,* PLATE 7
Hauer, Thomas, PLATE 6
Heaven's Gate Cult, 139–40
Hebblethwaite, John, 104, 168, 177
Henderlite, Dr. Rachel, 36
Henderlite, Nelle, 25, 30
Henderlite, Reverend Dr. James Henry, 15, 23–37, *24*
annual reports of 1919, 26–27
background, 25
baptisms with water from the Jordan River, 33
Boy Scout Troop 11, 27–28
cars, 23
children, 36–37
civic activities, 25, 34
Doctor of Divinity degree, 34
Great Depression era, 34–35
membership growth, 25–26
pension, 36
retirement and death, 36
sabbatical trip, 29–34
salary, 26–27, 29, 35
travelogue, 30–34

twenty-fifth anniversary celebration, 35–36
Union Theological Seminary scholarship endowment, 36
Vacation Bible School, 158–59
women in leadership roles, 108
Henderlite, Reverend Dr. Langdon, 74, 111
Henderlite Bible Class, 36, 125, *142*, 159, *160*
Hendrix, Shirley, *154*
Henry, George, Jr., 80–81, 131
Henry, James, 102, 104
Henry, Mrs. George, Jr., 131
Henry family, 22
Heritage Fund, 105, *106*, 130
Heritage Room, 18, PLATE 3
Dr. Henderlite's reports from abroad, 30
Marietta Street items, 12, 21
Memorials Book, 69
Miss Lizzie Adams plaque, 110, *147*
Hickson, Gloria, *132*
Hill, Roger, *171*
Hill, Taylor, *178*
Hileman, Jean, *128*
historical timeline, 193–203
histories of First Presbyterian Church
by Charles F. Daniel in 1961, 69–70
by Hugh Query in 1948, 187–88
by Rev. Robert Smith in 1895, 4–5
Hobson, Hal, 169
Hobson, Reverend J. Kemp, 73–74
Hodges, Garrison, PLATE 7
Hodges, Parker, PLATE 7
Holland, J. B., 16
Holland, James Quinn, 5, 6, 9, *19*, 21, 149
Holland, Julia, 5
Holland, Mrs. J. Q., 9
Holland, Stella, 9, 172
Holland family, 6
Holman, Amy, 158
honorary life memberships of women's organizations, 211–14
Hooker, Will, *145*
Hooks, Judy, *154*
Hôpital Lumière, 112–13
Hovis, Ashley, *178*
Hovis, Brittany, *178*
Howe, Jayne, *171*
Howe, Mary John, 151
Howe, Pressley, PLATE 7
Howe, Wayne, 102
Howren, Susan and John, 103
Hubbard, Helen, 44
Hudgins, Jeff, *171*
Hudson, Mrs. J. R., *55*
Huffman, Debbie and Hughes, 168
Hunter, Barbara, 133
Hunter, Nancy, *113*
Hunter, J. A., 6, *20*
Hunter family, 6
Hurricane Hugo, 121

IHS banner, *141*
Intentional Christian Experience (ICE), 89, 100, 163
Interfaith Hospitality Network, 145, 159, *161*

Jackson, Janet, 169, *170*
Jackson, John Frank, 21, 24, 44
Jackson, Judy, *41*
Jackson, "Miss Bess" P., 43, *43*, *55*
Jackson family, 6
Jarman, Bill, *150*
Jarman, Dick, *150*
Jarman, Kerry, 102
*Jesus of Nazareth*, 104
Johnson, Noel, 130, *131*, *140*, *142*, *160*
Johnston family, 6
Johnston, R. L., 5, 11

Johnston, Reverend R. Manfred, IV, 21
Jones, Arthur C., 24
Jones, Barbara, 117
Jones, Brandon, PLATE 6
Jones, Reverend Dr. James A., 84
Jones, James H., 37
Jones, Natalie, PLATE 7
Jones, Reverend Frank, 37
Jones, Virginia Henderlite, 37
Jones family, 22
Joy in the Morning service, 142–43, *143,* 184
Julian, Mrs. W. A., 45
Julian, W. A., 45

Keir, Louise Love, 19, *60*
Keith, Mary Katherine, *147*
Keith, William H., 105, *106,* 122, 130, 133, *140*
Keith family, 22
Kelly, Annabelle, 117, *144, 152*
Kelly, Dr. Bill, 112, 167
Kelly, Susan, *152*
Kemp, Helen Hubbard, 169
Kendrick, Ralph, Jr., 56
Kendrick, Ralph, Sr., 56
Kendrick Drive. *See* Garrison Boulevard church
Kennedy, James Holland, *14,* 21, 45
Kennedy, John F., assassination, 83
Kennedy, Mrs. James H., 45
Kennedy, Reverend J. J., 7, *7*
Kennedy family, 6
Kennington, Grady, *144,* 159, *161,* 163
Kersher, Paul, 105
Ketchum, Inc., 57–58
"Keyboards and Carols," 170
Keyzer, Helene, 111
Kimball pipe organ, 28
Kimbirl, Reverend John, *88*
Kimbrell, C. C., 149–51
Kimbrell, Duke, 80, 97, *106,* 115, 123, 149, 177
Kimbrell family, 22
Kimray, Jonathan, *178*
Kincaid, Mrs. Paul, 63
Kincaid, Paul P., 63
King, Betsy, 159
King, David, *144*
King, Lila, 116
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 81, 91
King, Scotty, 123
Kings Mountain Presbyterial, 108
Kirkham, Thomas, *145*
Kirkin' of the Tartans service, 130–32, *131–32,* PLATE 10
Kiser, Betty, *96*
Kluttz, Jo Ann, *41*
Knight, Matthew, PLATE 6
Knoxville World's Fair, *103*
Koinonia, 159
Kreutzer, Hilda, 44, *45*
Kunkle, Carl, *145*

Lackey, Dr. Don, 79
Lacy, Dr. Ben, *88*
Lacy, Reverend Dr. J. H., 24
Ladies' Aid Society, 107, 209
Ladies' Bible Class, 159, *161*
Ladies' Home and Foreign Mission Society, 107, 109–10, 209
Ladies' Missionary Society, 6, 107, 209
LaFar, D. R., Jr., 55, 57, 62, 64, *68*
LaFar, D. S., 62, *68*
LaFar, Dan, Jr., 87, 122, 123–24, 133, *146*
LaFar, David, 95
LaFar, Dottie, *171*
LaFar, Marshall, *150*
LaFar family, 22
Lambert, Reverend Dr. Clem, 92
Landale, Susan, 174
Lanz, Christine, *178*

Lattimore, Mrs. Louie M., 45, *55*
Lawson, Margaret, *154*
Lawson, W. D., III, 123
  Covenant Village, 94, 95, *96,* 97
  Garrison Boulevard church, 57, 60–63, *68,* 69
  Memorial carillon, 177
lay leadership, 17–22
  anonymous donors, 18
  building of the Marietta Street church, 17–20
  deacons of 1895, 6
  deacons of 1898, *20*
  during Dr. Stuart's ministry, 105
  elders of 1895, 6
  establishment of local mission churches, 44
  impression on Dr. Stuart, 90
  installation of officers, *181*
  Leadership Training School, 109
  pastor's aides, 53–54
  Sunday school superintendent, 155
  women, 114–15, 117, 119–20
  *See also* Session; women's activities
Layton, Mary, *145*
Leadership Training School, 109
Leeper, Sylvia, 123, 133
Leissner, Janet, *171*
Leith, Dr. John, 123, 125, 129
Lemmon, John, *145*
*Leviathan* ship, 30, 34
Leviner, R. L., *68*
Lewis, Leslie, 45, *171*
Lewis, William H., *14*
Liberty Presbyterian Church, 51
life memberships of women's organizations, 211–14
Lineberger, Allison Gordon, 130
Lineberger, Eli N., 11, 18
Lineberger, Laura and Robbie, 103
Linwood Presbyterian Church, 82, 110
Loftin, Bill, 44
Loftin, Charles, III, *41*
Loftin, Charles I., 62, *68*
Loftin, Martha Enck, 44
Loftin family, 22
Long, Dr. Tom, 129
Long, Linda, *154*
Long Brothers, 5
Long Street Church, 9
Loray Mill, 19–20
Love, Betty, *110*
Love, Bill, *88*
Love, John Franklin, 6, 11, 18, 19–20, *20,* 21
Love, Mrs. J. F., 6
Love, R. C. G., 6, 18, 19
Love, Susan Rhyne, 107
Love, Susie, 20
Love, William A., 20
Love family, 6
Lybrand, G. W., 11
Lytle, Mrs. Fred S., *106,* 151–52

Mackie, H. S., 43, 119
Mackie, Kitty, *3,* 43, 105, *106,* 117–20
Mackie, Spurgeon and Margaret, 120
Mackie family, 22
Mackorell, David, *41*
Mackorell, T. M., *79*
Madrigal Singers, 168
Majors, Mrs. L. C., 52
Mando, Helen, 41
Mann, Harry, 63
manse, *10,* 11–12, 28
Marguerite Ring Torrence Service Center, 152, *153*
Marietta Street church, *8, 35*
  brick sales, 12
  bronze bell, 18, 81
  construction, 11, 17–20
  cornerstone of 1895, 1–6, *3,* 72, *176*
  heating system, 5
  the Hut, 27, 40
  Italian carved capitals, 21

Marietta Street church (continued)
Junior Choir, 1946, *41*
Kimball pipe organ, 175
manse, *10,* 11–12, 28
memorial stained-glass windows, 20–21
men, 1916, *26*
men, 1922, *29*
Moëller handpump organ, 174
move to Garrison Boulevard, 56, 70
music program, 44
organ and piano purchases, 28
property size limitations, 55
renovations and modernization, 28, 54–55
staff, *43,* 43–44, 52–53
Sunday school building, 27
weddings, *42, 58, 59*
women, 1916, *27*
marketing committee for *A Christian Witness,* 219
Martin, C. H., 5
Martin, Jim, 127
Marvin, Helen Rhyne, 115, 126
Mason, John C., III, 18
Mason, Mrs. John C., Jr., 62
Mason, Susie, *113*
Massey, Charles, 94, *160*
Matheny, Lee Bonsac, 98
Matthews, Elizabeth (daughter), 9, 98
Matthews, Elizabeth Robinson (mother), 9, *55,* 57, 62–63
Matthews, Eugene, 9
Matthews, Frank, *3,* 9, *106,* 115, 177
Matthews, Gene, 102, *146*
Matthews, Houston, 9
Matthews, J. H., 9
Matthews, Mary Houston, *178*
Matthews family, 22
Mau, Marcia, 168–69
Maxon, Becky and Dave, 103
Mayes, Marion, 116
Mayes, Reverend Frank, 46–47, 85, 88, 123, *123*
"May the Grace of God Go with You," 169
McAlhaney, Jim, 125
McAlpine, Reverend and Mrs. James A., 74, 111
McArthur, S. E., 11
McChesney, Charles, 44
McCormick, Reverend L. R., 7, *7*
McCully, Andrew, PLATE 6
McCurry, Dan, 133
McCurry, Kendall, *178*
McCurry, Patricia, *145*
McFarland, Mary, 169–70, *170, 171,* 177
McGlohon, Loonis, 178
McGregor, Gill, 126
McIlwaine, Reverend W. E., 7, *7,* 109–10
McKenzie, Dorothy, 157, PLATE 15
McKenzie, Jim, *160*
McLean, Becky, *113*
McLean, Leslie, *150*
McLean, Rebecca Stowe, 98
McLean, Suzanne, *171*
McLean family, 6, 22
McLemore, Fannie, *113*
McSpadden, Connor, PLATE 6
McSpadden, Harrison, PLATE 6
Meakin, Jack, PLATE 6
Meals on Wheels, 116
Mecklenburg Presytery, 4, 9, 34
Meek, Arlena, *171*
members, 184
church discipline, 15–16
congregation goal-setting activities, 92–94, 99, 140–43
deteriorating growth, 183
under Dr. DeBevoise, 129
under Dr. Henderlite, 25–26, *26–27,* 29, 54

family legacies, 17
at 1882 formation, 5
member assimilation classes, 92
military service, 18–19, 46
Presbyterian ministry, 204
role in church management, 125
Silver Beaver Award recipients, 204
unchurching, 15
*See also* lay leadership; Women of the Church
Memorial Carillon, 4, 18, *66,* 72, 81, 175–78, *176*
memorials and endowments
Crisis Assistance Ministry, 44, *45,* 116
Frank Davis Children's Fund, 102
Groves Fund, 102
Heritage Fund, 105, *106,* 130
Presbyterian Endowment Trust, 88, 100–103, 135, *146*
R.E. Caldwell Benevolent Fund, 95
stained-glass windows, 20–21
Susie and George W. Ragan Spiritual Enrichment Fund, 129
Torrence Fund, 102
Men's Bible Class, 21, 36
Men's Missionary Society, 107
Mercer, Lucia Groves, 151
Miller, Dr. George, *111,* 112
Miller, Judy, *111,* 112, 116
Minges, Jamie, *152*
ministers, 7, 9–16
assistant ministers, 26
associate ministers, 206
call practices, 24–25
Director of Christian Education position, 155
interims, 123, 133
new cars, 23, 80–81
pensions, 36
responsibilities, 15
salaries, 26–27, 29, 35, 52
supply ministers, 7–9
*See also* names of individual ministers
mission activities, *111*
Brazil jeep project, 45
Children's Missionary Society, 109–10
Church World Service, 113
Community Kindergarten, 113
cornerstone envelope, 2
Dr. DeBevoise's Joy Campaign, 130, 184–85
Dr. Moffett's trip to Belgian Congo, 73–78, *75, 77*
foreign projects, 74, 107, 110–13
Habitat for Humanity, 130, 146, 159
Intentional Christian Experience, 89, 100, 163
Interfaith Hospitality Network, 145, 159, *161*
Ladies' Home and Foreign Mission Society, 107, 109
Ladies' Missionary Society, 6, 107
local, 27, 44, 113, 126–27, 145–46, PLATE 14
Men's Missionary Society, 107, 109
reputation of First Presbyterian, 140
under Reverend Ellis, 45
Serving Our Community with Kindness in Springwood program, 127, *127*
Super Cupboard program, 126–27
Third Street Presbyterian Church, 9, 102, 145, PLATE 14
Women of the Church activities, 110–13
youth trips, 163
*The Missionary* booklet, 4
Mitchell, Reverend Dr. Donald, 72, 133

Moffett, Margaret, 51, *68*
Moffett, Reverend Dr. H. D., 49
Moffett, Reverend Dr. Harry M., Jr., 49–55, *50, 55,* 61–85
background, 49, 51–52
Board of World Missions membership, 74
building of Garrison Boulevard church, 55, 61–70, *68*
call to First Presbyterian, 51–52
centennial celebration, 104
civic activity, 81–85
death, 84–85
Garrison Boulevard church dedication, 84
housing, 52
Kennedy, John F., assassination eulogy, 83
leisure activities, 79–80
Marietta Street church departure, 70
mission trip to Belgian Congo, 73–78, *75, 77,* PLATE 13
move to Garrison Boulevard, 70–72, 84
new cars, 80–81
prayer services, 78–79
resignation, 84
salary, 52
staff, 52–53
successor, 87
views on social issues, 76, 81–85
Moffett, Reverend Polk, 49
Montreat, 40, 108, 172, 175
Montreat College, 34
Moore, Sandra, *154*
More, Elisabeth Love, 135
Morris, Marti, PLATE 7
Morris, Mrs. Woody, *68*
Morrow, Ben, *144, 171*
Morrow, Catherine, *41*
Morrow, Mrs. John, 5
Morrow, Pat, 1–2, 102, *146,* PLATE 4
Moss, Charles, 44
Moss, Fred, 44
Moss, Mrs. Charles, 44
Moss, Mrs. Fred, 44
Mothers' Morning Out, 157
Mountain View Chapel, 44
Murphy, Mrs., *55*
Music, Worship, and the Arts Series, 174
music programs, 44–45, 167–81
carillon recitals, 177–78
Cassavant Frères Limited organ, 68–69, 71–72, *168,* 175
children's choirs, *41,* 168, *169,* 178, PLATE 16
choir loft, *168*
choir tours, 169
Christmas programs, 170–72, *172*
commissioned works, 169, 177
dedicatory organ recital at Garrison Boulevard church, 71–72
directors, 167–70, 178–79, 208
under Dr. Stuart, 100
First Church centennial celebration, 104
handbell choirs, 44–45, 169–70, *171*
hymnal decisions, 179–80
Junior Choir, *41*
Kimball pipe organ, 175
Madrigal Singers, 168
Meet the Composer weekend, 169
Memorial Carillon, 4, 18, *66,* 72, 81, 175–78, *176*
Moëller handpump organ, 174
Music, Worship, and the Arts Series, 174
Music and Worship Conference, 172
organ concerts, 173–74
organists, 172–74
organ recordings, 177
under Reverend Ellis, 39–44

"Ring and Sing" program, 169–70
Sanctuary Choir, 168–72, *171,* 178
Schlicker chapel organ, 175
singings at the Gordon home, 43, *43*
special musical offerings, 170–72, 177
"Spring Ring" program, 170
Steinway grand piano, 178
youth choirs, *169,* 170–72
Myers, Teresa, 104

Nason, Charles, PLATE 6
National Presbyterian Church, 138–39
nativity reenactment of 1996, *172*
Neal, Ann, 103
Nelli, Emma, PLATE 7
Nelson, Linda, *145*
Newcombe, Hannah, PLATE 7
Newcombe, Jennifer, PLATE 7
newsletters, 2, 43, 46
Nicene Creed banner, *185*
Nielsen, Gunnar, 103–4
Nielsen, Lisbet, 117, 119
Nielson, Stephen, 170
*A Nite of Comedy,* 104
*Noah,* 103
Noel, John, 174
*North Carolina Presbyterian* newspaper, 4
Nova Vocce ensemble, 174

Oglesby, Dr. William, Jr., 104, 129
Olney Presbyterian Church, 4, 5, 9, 184
O'Neal, A. B., 101–2
*One Hundred Years of Cooking,* 104, 116
O'Neill, Hannah, PLATE 7
organists, 172–74
origins of First Presbyterian Church, 4, 184
Ormand, Mrs. James, 63, 117, 155
"Our Fatherless Ones" pamphlet, 4
outreach activities. *See* mission activities
Overmyer, Reverend Joe, 158–59
Owen, Cathy, *88*
Owen, Clara, *178*
Owens, Janie Kendrick, 56
Owens, John Cleveland, Jr., 56
Owens, Steve, 56, 151, PLATE 6
Owensby, Susan, *154*
Owens family, 56

Page, Anna Laura, 169
Page, Ibby, *152,* 158
Page, J. E., *19*
Page family, 6
Parks, Katherine, *154*
Parsons, Chris, *140*
Parsons, Laura, 157–58, *170*
Paschall, Anna, PLATE 7
Patrick, Dr. W. M., 63
Patrick, Mary Ann, *3, 110, 152*
Patrick, Neale, 43, *43*
Patrick, Virginia, *152*
Patrick family, 22
Patterson, Annie L. P., 109
Patterson, Mrs. E. L., *55*
Payne, Erica, PLATE 7
Payne, Krista, PLATE 7
Peabody, Kitty, *128*
Pearl Wilson Fund for Missions, 102
Peck-Smead Company, 5
Peden, Bennie, *113*
Peden, John, *79,* 132
Peek, Dr. Richard, 71–72, 175
Pegram, David, 2, 133, *179*
Pegram, Mrs. T. C., 6
Pegram, T. C., 6, 11, *20*
Pegram family, 6
Perryman, Reverend Patrick, 129, *139, 140,* 146, *178, 179*
Pershing, John J., 34

Petit, Kim, 178
Piedmont Chapel, 44, 110
Piedmont Council Scout Headquarters, 149–51, *150*
Piephoff, Reverend Zack, 123
Pierce, Scott, *145*
Pinnix, R. H., 64, *68*
Pioneer Council Girl Scouts, 151
Planer, Geof, *142*
Planer, Judith, *145, 173*
pledge cards, 2
Poag, Beverly, *170*
Poag, Jim, *170*
Pote, Allan, 169
Pratt, Reverend Clyde, 163
prayers
  by Committee of History and Archives, 120
  by Dr. David C. Stoker, 147, 164–65
  by Dr. Donald Mitchell, 72
  by Dr. Douglas Aldrich, 22, 106
  by Dr. James G. Stuart, 16, 154
  by Dr. John DeBevoise, 136
  by Dr. Wilson P. Rhoton, Jr., 37
  by Hugh A. Query, 187–88
  by Reverend Frank Mayes, 46–47, 85
  by Reverend John C. Pruitt, 180–81
Presbyterian Church Foreign Missions, 45
Presbyterian Church USA Board of World Missions, 73–74
Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), 105
Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET), 88, 100–103, 135, *146*
Presbyterian Junior College, 34
Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 51
Presbyterian Trotters, *103,* 133, *134,* PLATE 8
Presbyterian Weekday School, 102, 155–57, *156, 157,* PLATE 15
Presbyterian Women, 107
  blood drives, *110*
  congregational care, 108–9
  Honorary Life Memberships, 211–14
  honors and memorials, 109
  presidents, 210–11
  *See also* women's activities
Presbytery participants, 120
presidents of women's organizations, 209–11
Pritchett, Amelia, 178
Professional Counseling Services, 89
*The Prophet and the Carpenter,* 103
Pruitt, Reverend John, *139,* 146, 180–81
Puett, Corinne, *55*

Quarles, Bill, *160*
Quarles, Gordon, *144*
Quarles, William, *178*
Queens College, 34
Query, Hugh A., 30, 49, 187–88
Query, Mrs. Hugh, 25, 54, *55,* 63

race relations and civil rights, 76, 81–85, 91–92, 155
Ragan, Caldwell, 21, 62
Ragan, George W., 6, *14,* 18–21, *20,* 28, 129
Ragan, George W., Jr., 21
Ragan, Lydia, *96*
Ragan, Mrs. Amanda Zoe, 20
Ragan, Robert, 107–8
Ragan, Susie, 129
Ragan family, 6
Ramseur, Mrs. Hubert, 108–9
Rankin, Jane, *154*
Rankin, John R., 36
Rankin, Lucille, 158–59

Rankin family, 22
Ratchford, David, 56, 98
Ratchford, Fred A., *45,* 62
Ratchford, Joseph Fisher, 56
Ratchford, Reverend Dr. Robert W., 56
Ratchford, William C., 56, 105, *106*
Ratchford family, 6
Ratcliffe, Jere B., 149
Rauch, Marshall, 59–60
Ray family, 22
Reagan, Ronald, 139
Reese, Julia Kay, PLATE 7
Reese, Katie, PLATE 7
Reid, Lela Shuford, 107
Reid, Ruth, *88*
religious education. *See* Christian education
Renfro, Anna, *170*
retirement village. *See* Covenant Village project
Rhinehart, Tori, PLATE 7
Rhodes, Emily, PLATE 7
Rhoton, Reverend Dr. Wilson P., Jr., 37
Rhyne, Mrs. Walter G., *55,* 63
Rhyne family, 6
Richards, Reverend Dr. C. M., 24
Richardson, Dell, *154*
Rios, James, PLATE 6
Roach, Sam, PLATE 6
Roadrunners, *135*
Roberts, Evan, *178*
Roberts, Rebecca, *145*
Roberts, Ruby Lee, 123
Robertson, Peggy, *145*
Robinson, Florence, *41*
Robinson, J. Lee, 6, *14, 20,* 21
Robinson, Leigh Ann, *152*
Robinson, Mrs. Ralph, Sr., 63, 102
Robinson, Mrs. S. A., *55*
Robinson, Nancy Dean McLean, 21
Robinson, Ralph, Jr., *106,* 115, 122, 140
Robinson, Ralph S., Sr., 55–56, 57, 62, 102
Robinson, Reverend C. W., 7, *13,* 109–10
Robinson, Sally, 102, *146*
Robinson, Sue Gallant, 108
Rogg, Lionel, 174
Rollins, Lee, PLATE 6
Romer, Mildred, 162
Rotary Club, 35–36
Rowley, Ben, PLATE 6
Rowley, John, PLATE 6
Royster, Annabelle and David, 133
Rusk, Dean, 51
Rutherford, Lori, PLATE 7

sabbaticals, 29–34, 105–6, 129
Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, 145
Sampson, Reverend T. R., 107
Sanctuary Choir. *See* music programs
Schneider, Leon, *60*
Schroeder, Brian, *144, 171*
"Scottish Fantasy," 177
scouting. *See* Boy Scout activities; Girl Scout activities
scriptures
*I Chronicles 13:8,* 167
*Galatians 6:6, 9, 10,* 155
*Hebrew 12:1,* xiii
*Isaiah 40:28–31,* 183
*Isaiah 64:8,* 87
*Jeremiah 6:16,* v
*John 1:1–4,* 1
*Matthew 16:18,* 49
*Matthew 17:20,* 49
*Matthew 25:34–36,* 121
*Proverbs 8:14,* 107
*Psalm 1:1, 3,* 23
*Psalm 23:1,* 121
*Psalm 84:1–2,* 39
*Psalm 121:1, 2, 8,* 73

scriptures (continued)
*Psalm 127:1,* 17
*I Timothy 4:12,* 149
Seekers Bible Class, *119,* 159
Serving Our Community with Kindness in Springwood program, 127, *127*
Session
of 1898, *19*
of 1902, 21
of 2004, *144*
of 2005, 220
*Book of Church Order* requirements, 15, 143
clerks, 205
disciplining of congregants, 15–16
under Dr. DeBevoise, 130
under Dr. Stuart, 89
hymnal decisions, 179–80
integration resolution of 1963, 82
Joy in the Morning service, 142–43
oversight of Christian education, 159
sabbatical gifts, 105–6, 129
views on social issues, 128
Vision 2000, 140
women participants, 114–15, 117
Setzer, Wilson, 79
Setziel, LeRoy, 67
Shannon, J. R., 6, 11, *19*
Shannon family, 6
Shaw, Dr. John and Mrs. Sharon, *111,* 111–12
Sherrill, Bill, *170*
Sherron, John, *145*
Shields, Reverend Malcolm McG., *13,* 14, *19*
Shive, L. Jerry, 62
Shive, Verne, 44
Shovelin, Julia, 152
Shriver, Reverend Donald W., Jr., 82–83
Siler, John, 173, *173*
Silvers, Beth, 159
Sims, Jamie, PLATE 6
Sims, Michael, PLATE 6
Smith, B. E., *79*
Smith, Bobi, *152*
Smith, Brandon, PLATE 6
Smith, Ella Reid, 12
Smith, Elvira, 5
Smith, Reverend Robert Perry, 1–2, 7, 11–13, *13*
church history, 4–5
cornerstone time capsule, 5–6
Marietta Street building, *8,* 11
Smith family, 6
Smyre, Alfred Monroe, 5, 11, 16, *19,* 21, 72, 92
Smyre, Brownie, 152
Smyre, F. L. "Rick," III, 92–94, 97
Smyre, Frederick Lewis, Sr., 72
Smyre, Fred L., Jr., 57, 62, 84
Smyre, Mrs. Alfred Monroe, 6, 72, 107
Smyre, Mrs. Frederick L., Sr., 62, 72
Smyre, Sarah A., 5
Smyre family, 6
*The Sound of Music,* 103, PLATE 5
Southern Presbyterian Church, 34
South Fork River, 10–11
Southminster Presbyterian Church, 102–3
Sparrow, Clara Baity, 98
Sparrow, W. R., 57, 63
Spectrum, 98
Spencer, Dr. Arthur, III, 98
Spencer, Freda Goforth, 98
Spencer, Gray, 98
Spencer, Lee, PLATE 6
Spencer, Marguerite, 151
Spencer family, 6
*Spindles and Spires* (Shriver), 82–83
Stafford, Ring T., *146,* 152
Stell, Reverend Lawrence, 123

Stephen Ministry of First Presbyterian Church, 135
Stewart, Trip, *3,* 98–99, *171,* 178
Stewart family, 22
Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, 81
Stoker, Reverend Dr. David, 1–2, *132,* 137–47, *138, 139, 144, 146*
background, 137–39, 149
call to First Presbyterian, 137, 139–40
Christian education, 143–45
Joy in the Morning service, 142–43, *143,* 184
peacemaking trip to Jordan, 146
prayers, 147, 164–65
Vision 2000, 140–43
youth ministry, *178*
*Stone Soup* (Brown), 116
Stone Soup recipe, 116–17
Stover, Doug, *146*
Stover, Rob, *178*
Stover, Susan, *144*
Stowe, Betty Sloan, 158–59
Stowe, Beverly, 102
Stowe, Reverend Dr. Joe, 102, 125–26, *126,* 131
Stuart, James Gordon "Jeb," Jr., *89,* 90, 94–99
Stuart, Katherine Elizabeth, *89,* 90
Stuart, Leslie Anne, *89,* 90
Stuart, Mary Beth, *89,* 90
Stuart, Reverend Dr. James Gordon, 87–106, *89*
background, 88–91
call to First Presbyterian, 87
chapel services, 91
Children's Church/A Time for Young Disciples, 100, *101*
columbarium, 88
congregation goal-setting activities, 92–94, 99, 105
Covenant Village project, 88, 89, *96*
Doctor of Ministry thesis, 88
drama program, 100, 103–4, PLATE 5
First Church centennial celebration, 104–5
guest at Kirkin' service, 132
Intentional Christian Experience program, 89, 100
leadership style, 88–89
member assimilation classes, 92
music program, 100
nativity scenes, 104
pastoral counseling training, 90–91
prayers, 16, 154
Presbyterian Endowment Trust, 88, 100–103
Professional Counseling Services program, 89
retirement, 87, 105–6
sabbaticals, 105–6
successor, 122
women's roles in the church leadership, 88, 115
youth ministry, 88, 99–100
Stuff 'n' Study program, 105, 168
Styers, Helen, 178
Sudderth, Pat, 103
Sudduth, Barbara, *152*
Sudduth, Roy, 44
Summer, Tom, 2, *3,* 4, 72
Summerell, J. N., 114
Summerell, Margaret Vaughn, 54, 57, 62–63, 114, *115*
Summerell family, 22
Sumner, Beverly, *145*
Sumner, Carolyn Warren, 151
Sumner, Elizabeth, *144, 146*
Sumner, Ernest, *178,* PLATE 6
Sumner, Harold, 97
Sumner, Mary, *145*
Sumner, Robert E. III, *106*
Super Cupboard program, 126–27

Susie and George W. Ragan Spiritual Enrichment Fund, 129
Swilling, Charlene, *171,* 178
Sytz, Parker, PLATE 6

Talley, Nancy, *88*
Taylor, Cas, PLATE 4
Taylor, Eubank, 52–53, *68*
Taylor, James, Jr., 18, *150*
Taylor, Lee, 142–43, *144*
Taylor, Martha, 102
Taylor, Reverend Reichardt, 45
Taylor family, 22
"Teach Me Lord," 178
Temple Emmanuel, 59–60
Templeton, Elmer, 175
Templeton, John, *88*
Templeton, Mary Sexton Smyre, 175
Third Street Presbyterian Church, 9, 102, 145, PLATE 14
Thomas, Alex, *178*
Thomas, André, 169
Thomas, Sandy, *154*
Thompson, Landon, 87
Thompson, Marshall, 57–58
Thompson, Mary, *41*
Thompson, Nancy, *41*
Thompson family, 6
Thrower, Elizabeth, *145*
Timberlake family, 22
time capsule. *See* cornerstone time capsule of 1895
*A* Time for Young Disciples, 100, *101*
timeline, 193–203
Torrence, Charlton K., Jr., *3,* 6, 7
Torrence, Charlton K., Sr., 45, 62, 123, 184–84
Torrence, Frost, 6, 45
Torrence, Jean Marie, 7, 114–15, *115, 144*
Torrence, Marguerite Ring, 151, 152
Torrence, Mary Elizabeth, 18
Torrence, Mrs. Charlton K., Sr., 45
Torrence, Mrs. Frost, 6, 45
Torrence family, 22
Torrence Fund, 102
Tremble, Reverend and Mrs. U. T., 74
Tucker, Phyllis, *113*
Tull, Susan, *154*
Turner, Patsy Bratton, 100

unchurching of members, 15
Union Presbyterian Church, 5, 9, 184
Union Theological Seminary in New York, 82
Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, 34, 36, 51, 83–84
United Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA), 105
Upchurch, Margaret Dunn, 123, 152, *152*
Upchurch, Peggy, *152*

Vacation Bible School, *54, 156,* 157, 158–59
Vance, B'Ann, 152, *171*
Vaughn, Anna, *178*
Vaughn, Joseph, PLATE 6
Vaughn, Michelle, PLATE 7
Vaughn, Turner, PLATE 6
Vienna Choir Boys, 174
Vision 2000, 140–43
Voorhees, Barbara, 1–2

Waggoner, Lon, *144*
Wagoner, Harold, 57, 61–64, 67–71, 138
Walker, Karen, *154*
Walker, Mary Olive, 43–44, 119, 151
Walton, Jimmy, *41*
Walton, Peggy, 178
Ward, Theresa, *41*
Warren, Edith, 167–68
Warren, Myrtle, 158–59
Warren family, 6

war veterans, 18–19, 215–19
Waters, Fred, 63
Watson, Ann, *154*
Watson, Craig, 62, 80, 177
Watson, Richard, 177
Watson, Tom, *150, 171*
Watson family, 22
Watts, Coralie, PLATE 7
Watts, Kenna, PLATE 7
*We All Are Barabas* (Rachel Henderlite), 36
weddings, *42, 58, 59*
Weese, Carolyn, 140–42
Weiss, Jeff, 169
Wentz, Sarah, *128*
West Avenue Presbyterian Church, 21
Westminster Choir College, 44
Westminster Confession banner, *185*
Westminster League, 110
Weston, Brock, *178*
Wetzell, Billy, *150*
Wetzell, Blanche and Charles, 103
Wetzell, Mary, *154*
Wetzell, Nan, 63, 155–57
Wetzell, W. L., Jr., 51–52
Wetzell family, 22
Whisnant, Howard, *130*
White, Burkie, *113*
White family, 6
Whitener, Lee, *154*
Wilds, Samuel, *164*
Wilkerson, Janice, 178–79
Wilkie, Bruce, *88*
Wilkins, Mrs. John, 44
Willcox, Iris, *147*
Williams, Ali, *178*
Williams, Betty Ruth, 117
Williams, Bill, 133
Williams, Debbie, *154*
Williams, Holly, *88, 152*
Williams, Marjorie, *154*
Williams, Mary Lanier, PLATE 7
Williams, Phil, *160*
Williams, Richard, *88*
Williamson, A. C., 11
Williamson, Robert A., 20–21
Williamson family, 6
Williford, Wade, 44
Willing Workers, 110
Wilson, Charles, 11
Wilson, Dr. Dan, *132, 160*
Wilson, Ed, *14*
Wilson, Larry, *145*
Wilson, Mrs. T. L., 63
Wilson, Pearl, 135
Wilson, Penny, 126
Wilson, Ross, *178*
Wilson, T. W., 6, *20*
Wilson family, 6
Winget, A. K., 21
Winget, Knox, III, 21
Winget, Sarah, PLATE 7
Winget, Shelton, PLATE 7
Winget family, 22
Wireman, Reverend Dr. Billy, 132
Wise, Griffin, *178*
Wise, Whitner, PLATE 7
Withers, Brendan, *178*
Women of the Church, 107
  Community Kindergarten, 113
  congregational care, 108–9
  Cooperative Christian Ministry, 116
  Crab Shrimp Casserole, 118
  *Dinner Chimes,* 117
  food and meals programs, 115–16, *116*
  Honorary Life Memberships, 211–14
  honors and memorials, 108–9
  hospitality activities, 118
  mission work, 110–13, 115–16, *116*
  officers, 108
  *One Hundred Years of Cooking,* 104, 116–17
  Pastor's Aides, 53–54, 109

Women of the Church (continued)
prayer groups, 74–75
presidents, 209–10
women's activities, 107–20
in 1895, 6
blood drives, *110*
Eunice Warren Bible Class, *114*
honorary life memberships of organizations, 211–14
Ladies' Aid Society, 107
Ladies' Bible Class, 159, *161*
Ladies' Home and Foreign Mission Society, 107, 109–10
Ladies' Missionary Society, 6, 107
leadership, 88, 107, 114–15, 117, 119–20
Leadership Training School, 109
presidents of organizations, 209–11
Seekers Bible Class, *119*, 159
sewing room, 113, *113*
*See also* Presbyterian Women; Women of the Church
Women's Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 107
Wood, Alice, 41
Woods, Vanna, *60*
Woody, Dr. Gene, 79
Workman, Trigger, *79*
Worlds Fair of 1982, *103*
Wray, Mrs. Joe, 25
Wren, Bob, 102
Wren, William, *178*
Wyche, Bill, *150*
Wynkoop, Daniel, 179

Yarbrough, David, *79*
Yarbrough, Doris Ann, *41*
Yarbrough, Norma Jean, *41*
Young, Ovid, 170
youth ministry, 162–63, PLATE 9
Communicants Class of 1968, *88*
Communicants Class of 1975, *93*
Communicants Class of 2004, *178*
confirmation class, *175*
directors, 162–63, 207
Easter sunrise services, 162
Intentional Christian Experience, 100, 163
Middle School Singers and Ringers, 170–72
mission activities, 163
under Reverend DeBevoise, 125–26
under Reverend Ellis, 40–41, 43
under Reverend Stuart, 88, 92, 99–100
Senior High Beach Bash, PLATE 2
Senior High Singers and Ringers, 170–72
singings at the Gordon home, 43, *43*
Thursday breakfast and Bible study, 162–63, *163*
Young People's Council, 1954, *43*
*See also* children's activities

Zeigler, Charles E., 177
Zeigler, Dottie, *152*
Zeigler, Nancy, *88*
Zeigler family, 22

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL
00043135552

FOR USE ONLY IN
THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

Form No. A-368, Rev. 8/95